THE VEILED LADY

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THE VEILED LADY

AND OTHER MEN AND WOMEN

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"Don't move and don't look," whispered Joe.

THE VEILED LADY

And Other Men and Women

BY

F. HOPKINSON SMITH

ILLUSTRATED

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Published, March, 1907

To my Readers:

This collection of stories has been labelled "The Veiled Lady" as being the easiest way out of a dilemma; and yet the title may be misleading. While, beyond doubt, there is between these covers a most charming and lovable Houri, to whom the nightingales sing lullabies, there can also be found a surpassingly beautiful Venetian whose love affairs upset a Quarter, a common-sense, motherly nurse whose heart warmed toward her companion in the adjoining berth, a plucky New England girl with the courage of her convictions, and a prim spinster whose only consolation was the boarder who sat opposite.

Nor does the list by any means end here. Rough sea-dogs, with friendly feelings toward other dogs, crop up, as well as brave Titans who make derricks of their arms and fender-piles of their bodies. Here, too, are skinny, sun-dried Excellencies with a taste for revolutions, well-groomed club swells with a taste for adventure and cocktails, not to mention half a dozen gay,

rollicking Bohemians with a taste for everything that came their way.

Perhaps it might have been best to enclose each story in a separate cover, and then to dump the un-assorted lot upon the table, where those who wished could make their choice. And yet, as I turn the leaves, I must admit that, after all, the present form is best, since each and every incident, situation, and bit of local color has either passed before or was poured into the wide-open eyes and willing ears of your most humble and obedient servant

A Staid Old Painter.

150 East 34th Street,
New York, March 13, 1907.

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THE VEILED LADY OF STAMBOUL

THE VEILED LADY OF STAMBOUL

Joe Hornstog told me this story—the first part of it; the last part of it came to me in a way which proves how small the world is.

Joe belongs to that conglomerate mass of heterogeneous nationalities found around the Golden Horn, whose ancestry is as difficult to trace as a gypsy's. He says he is a "Jew gentleman from Germany," but he can't prove it, and he knows he can't.

There is no question about his being part Jew, and there is a strong probability of his being part German, and, strange to say, there is not the slightest doubt of his being part gentleman—in his own estimation; and I must say in mine, when I look back over an acquaintance covering many years and remember how completely my bank account was at his disposal and how little of its contents he appropriated.

And yet, were I required to hold up my hand in open court, I would have to affirm that Joe, whatever his other strains might be, was, after all, ninety-nine per cent. Levantine—which is another way of saying that he is part of every nationality about him.

As to his honesty and loyalty, is he not the chosen dragoman of kings and princes when they journey into far distant lands (he speaks seven languages and many tribal dialects), and is he not today wearing in his buttonhole the ribbon of the order of the Mejidieh, bestowed upon him by his Imperial Highness the Sultan, in reward for his ability and faithfulness?

I must admit that I myself have been his debtor—not once, but many times. It was this same quick-sighted, quick-witted Levantine who lifted me from my sketching stool and stood me on my feet in the plaza of the Hippodrome one morning just in time to prevent my being trodden under foot by six Turks carrying the body of their friend to the cemetery—in time, too, to save me from the unforgivable sin among Orientals, of want of reverence for their dead. I had heard the tramp of the pall-bearers, and supposing it to be that of the Turkish patrol, had kept at work. They were prowling everywhere, day and night, and during those days they passed every ten minutes—nine soldiers in charge of an officer of police—all owing to the fact that some five thousand Armenians, anxious to establish a new form of government, had been wiped out of existence only the week before.

Once on my feet (Joe accomplished his purpose

with the help of my suspenders) and the situation clear, I had sense enough left to uncover my head and stand in an attitude of profound reverence until the procession had passed. I can see them now—the coffin wrapped in a camel's-hair shawl, the dead man's fez and turban resting on top. Then I replaced my hat and finished the last of the six minarets of the mosque gleaming like opals in the soft light of the morning.

This act of courtesy, due so little to my own initiative, and so largely to Joe's, gained for me many friends in and about the mosque—not only those of the dead man, one of whom rowed a caïque, but among the priests who formed the funeral *cortège*—a fact unknown to me until Joe imparted it. "Turk-man say you good man, effendi," was the way he put it. "You stoop over yourselluf humble for their dead."

On another occasion Joe again stood by my side when, with hat off and with body in a half *kotow,* I sat before the Pasha, who was acting chief of police after that stormy Armenian week—it was over really in five days.

"Most High Potentate," Joe began, translating my plain Anglo-Saxon "Please, sir," into Eastern hyperbolics, "I again seek your Excellency's presence to make my obeisance and to crave your permission to transfer to cheap paper some of the glories of this

City of Turquoise and Ivory. This, if your Highness will deign to remember, is not the first time I have trespassed. Twice before have I prostrated myself, and twice has your Sublimity granted my request."

"These be troublous times," puffed his Swarthiness through his mustache, his tobacco-stained fingers meanwhile rolling a cigarette; a dark-skinned, heavily-bearded Oriental, this Pasha, with an eye that burned holes in you. "You should await a more peaceful season, effendi, for your art."

"On account of the Armenians, your Excellency?" I ventured to inquire with a smile.

"Yes." This, in translation by Joe, came with a whistling sound, like the escaping steam of a radiator.

"But why should I fear these disturbers of the peace, your Supreme Highness? The Turk is my friend, and has been for years. They know me and my pure and unblemished life. They also know by this time that I have been one of the chosen few among nations who have enjoyed your Highness's confidence, and to whom you have given protection." Here my spine took the form of a horseshoe curve—Moorish pattern. "As to these dogs of Armenians" (this last was Joe's, given with a growl to show his deep detestation of the race—part of his own, if he would but acknowledge it), "your Excellency will

look out for them." He *was* looking out for them at the rate of one hundred a day and no questions asked or answered so far as the poor fellows were concerned.

At this the distinguished Oriental finished rolling his cigarette, looked at me blandly—it is astonishing how sweet a smile can overspread the face of a Turk when he is granting you a favor or signing the death warrant of an infidel—clapped his hands, summoning an attendant who came in on all fours, and whispered an order in the left ear of the almost prostrate man. This done, the Pasha rose from his seat, straightened his shoulders (no handsomer men the world over than these high-class Turks), shook my hand warmly, gave me the Turkish salute—heart, mouth, and forehead touched with the tips of flying fingers—and bowed me out.

Once through the flat leather curtain that hid the exit door of the Pasha's office, and into the bare corridor, I led Joe to a corner out of the hearing of the ever-present spy, and, nailing him to the wall, propounded this query:

"What did the High-Pan-Jam say, Joe?"

Hornstog raised his shoulders level with his ears, fanned out his fingers, crooked his elbows, and in his best conglomerate answered:

"He say, effendi, that a guard of *ein* men, Yusuf,

his name—I know him—he is in the Secret Service—oh, we will have no trouble with him——" Here Joe chafed his thumb and forefinger with the movement of a paying teller counting a roll. "He come every morning to Galata Bridge for you me. He say, too, if any trouble while you paint I go him—ah, effendi, it is only Joe Hornstog can do these things. The Pasha, he know me—all good Turk-men know me. Where we paint now, *subito?* In the plaza, or in the *patio* of the Valedée, like last year?"

"Neither. We go first to the Mosque of Suleiman. I want the view through the gate of the court-yard, with the mosque in the background. Best place is below the café. Pick up those traps and come along."

Thus it was that on this particular summer afternoon Joe and I found ourselves on the shadow side of a wall up a crooked, break-neck street paved with rocks, each as big as a dress-suit case, from which I got a full view of the wonderful mosque tossing its splendors into the still air, its cresting of minarets so much frozen spray against the blue.

The little comedy—or shall I say tragedy?—began a few minutes after I had opened my easel—I sitting crouched in the shadow, my elbow touching the plastered wall. Only Joe and I were present. Yusuf, the guard, a skinny, half-fed Turk in fez and European dress, had as usual betaken himself

to the café fronting the same sidewalk on which I sat, but half a block away; far enough to be out of hearing, but near enough to miss my presence should I decamp suddenly without notifying him. There he drank some fifty cups of coffee, each one the size of a thimble, and smoked as many cigarettes, their burned stubs locating his seat under the café awning as clearly as peanut-shells mark a boy's at the circus. I, of course, paid for both.

So absorbed was I in my work—the mosque never was so beautiful as on that day—I gave no thought to the fact that in my eagerness to hide my canvas from the prying sun I had really backed myself into a small wooden gate, its lintel level with the sidewalk —a dry, dusty, sun-blistered gate, without lock or hasp on the outside, and evidently long closed. Even then I would not have noticed it, had not my ears caught the sound of a voice—two voices, in fact—low, gurgling voices—as if a fountain had just been turned on, spattering the leaves about it. Then my eye lighted, not only on the gate, but upon a seam or split in the wood, half-way up its height, showing where a panel was sometimes pushed back, perhaps for surer identification, before the inside wooden beam would be loosened.

So potent was the spell of the mosque's witchery that the next instant I should have forgotten both

door and panel had not Joe touched the toe of my boot with his own—he was sitting close to me—and in explanation lifted his eyebrow a hair's breadth, his eyes fixed on the slowly sliding panel—sliding noiselessly, an inch at a time. Only then did my mind act.

What I saw was first a glow of yellow green, then a mass of blossoms, then a throat, chin and face, one after another, all veiled in a gossamer thin as a spider's web, and last—and these I shall never forget—a pair of eyes shining clear below and above the veil, and which gazed into mine with the same steady, full, unfrightened look one sometimes sees on the face of a summer moon when it bursts through a rift in the clouds.

"Don't move and don't look," whispered Joe in my ear, a tone in his voice of one who had just seen a ghost. "Allah! *Ekber!* Yuleima!"

"Who is she?" I answered, craning my neck to see the closer.

"No speak now—keep still," he mumbled under his breath.

It may have been the gossamer veil shading a rose skin, making pink pearls of the cheeks and chin and lending its charm to the other features; or it may have been the wonderful eyes that made me oblivious of Joe's warning, for I did look—looked with all my eyes, and kept on looking.

Men have died for just such eyes. Even now, staid old painter as I am, the very remembrance of their wondrous size—big as a young doe's and as pleading, their lids fringed by long feathery lashes that opened and shut with the movement of a tired butterfly—sends little thrills of delight scampering up and down my spine. Bulbuls, timid gazelles, perfumed narghilehs, anklets of beaten gold strung with turquoise, tinkling cymbals, tiny turned-up slippers with silk tassels on their toes—everything that told of the intoxicating life of the East were mirrored in their unfathomed depths.

Most of these qualities, I am aware, are found in many another pair of lambent, dreamy eyes half-hidden by the soft folds of a yashmak—eyes which these houris often flash on some poor devil of a *giaour,* knowing how safe they are and how slim his chance for further acquaintance. Strange tales are told of their seductive power and strange disappearances take place because of them. And yet I saw at a glance that there was nothing of all this in her wondering gaze. Her eyes, in fact, were fixed neither on Joseph nor on me, nor did they linger for one instant on the beautiful mosque. It was my canvas that held their gaze. Men and mosques were old stories; pictures of either as astounding as a glimpse into heaven.

Again Joe bent his head and whispered to me, his glance this time on the mosque, on the hill, on the café, where Yusuf sat sipping his coffee, talking to me all the time out of the corner of his mouth.

"Remember, effendi, if Yusuf come we go way *chabouk*. You look at your picture all time—paint—no look at her. If Yusuf come and catch us it make trouble for her—make trouble for you—make more trouble for me. Police Pasha don't know she come to this garden—I think somebody must help her. You better stop now and go café. I find Yusuf. I no like this place."

With this Hornstog rose to his feet and began packing the trap, still whispering, his eyes on the ground. Never once did he look in the direction of the houri peering through the sliding panel.

The clatter of a horse's hoofs now resounded through the still air. A mounted officer was approaching. Joe looked up, turned a light pea-green, backed his body into the gate with the movement of an eel, put his cheek close to the sliding panel, and whispered some words in Turkish. The girl leaned a little forward, glanced at the officer as if in confirmation of Joseph's warning, and smothering a low cry, sprang back from the opening. The next instant my eye caught the thumb and forefinger of a black hand noiselessly closing the panel. Joe

straightened up, pulled himself into the position of a sentinel on guard, saluted the officer, who passed without looking to the right or left, drew a handkerchief from his pocket, and began mopping his head.

"What the devil is it all about, Joe? Why, you look as if you had had the wind knocked out of you."

"Oh, awful close, awful close! I tell you—but not here. Come, we go 'way—we go now—not stay here any more. If that officer see the lady with us the Pasha send me to black mosque for five year and you find yourself board ship on way to Tripoli. Here come Yusuf—damn him! You tell him you no like view of mosque from here—say you find another place to-morrow—you do this quick. Hornstog never lie."

On my way across the Galata Bridge to my quarters in Pera that same afternoon Joe followed until Yusuf had made his *kotow* and we had made ours, the three ending in a triple flight of fingers—waited until the guard was well on his way back to the Pasha's office—it was but a short way from the Stamboul end of the Galata—and drawing me into one of the small cafés overlooking the waters of the Golden Horn, seated me at the far end near a window where we could talk without being overheard. Here Joe ordered coffee and laid a package of cigarettes on the table.

"My! but that was like the razor at the throat—

not for all the hairs on my head would I had her look out the small hole in the door when Serim come along. Somebody must be take care of you, you Joe Hornstog, that you don't make damn big fool of yourselluf. Ha! but it make me creep like a spider crawl."

I had pulled up a chair by this time and was facing him.

"Now what is it? Who is the girl? Who was the chap on horseback?"

"That man on the horse is Serim Pasha, chief of the palace police. He has eyes around twice; one in the forehead, one in each ear, one in the behind of his head. He did not see her—if he did—well, we would not be talk now together—sure not after to-morrow night."

"But what has he got to do with it? What did you say her name was? Yuleima?"

"Yes, Yuleima. What has Serim to do with her? Well, I tell you. If she get away off go Serim's head. Listen! I speak something you never hear anywhere 'cept in Turk-man's land. I know it all—everything. I know her prince—he knows me. I meet him Damascus once—he told me some things then—the tears run his cheeks down like a baby's when he talk—and Serim know I know somethings! Ah! that's why he not believe me if he catch me talk

to her. Afterward I find more out from my friend in Yuleima's house—he is the gardener. Put your head close, effendi."

I drew my chair nearer and listened.

"Yuleima," began Joe, "is one womans like no other womans in all——"

But I shall not attempt the dragoman's halting, broken jargon interspersed with Italian and German words—it will grate on you as it grated on me. I will assume for the moment—and Joe would be most thankful to have me do so—that the learned Hornstog, the friend of kings and princes, is as fluent in English as he is in Turkish, Arabic, and Greek.

It all began in a caïque—or rather in two caïques. One was on its way to a little white house that nestles among the firs at the foot of the bare brown hill overlooking the village of Beicos. The other was bound for the Fountain Beautiful, where the women and their slaves take the air in the soft summer mornings.

In the first caïque, rowed by two *caïque-jis* gorgeously dressed in fluffy trousers and blouses embroidered in gold, sat the daughter of the rich Bagdad merchant.

In the second caïque, cigarette in hand, lounged the nephew of the Khedive, Mahmoud Bey; scarce twenty, slight, oval face with full lips, hair black as sealskin and as soft, and eyes that smouldered under

heavy lids. Four rowers in blue and silver attended his Highness, the amber-colored boat skimming the waters as a tropical bird skims a lagoon.

The two had passed each other the week before on the day of the Selamlik (the Turkish holiday) while paddling up the Sweet Waters of Asia—a little brook running into the Bosphorus and deep enough for caïques to float, and every day since that blissful moment my lady had spent the morning under the wide-spreading plane-trees shading the Fountain Beautiful—the *Chesmegazell*—attended by her faithful slave Multif, her beautiful body stretched on a Damascus rug of priceless value, her eager eyes searching the blue waters of the Bosphorus.

On this particular morning—my lady had just stepped into her boat—the young man was seen to raise himself on his elbow, lift his eyelids, and a slight flush suffused his swarthy cheeks. Then came an order in a low voice, and the caïque swerved in its course and headed for the dot of white and gold in which sat Multif and my lady. The Spanish caballero haunts the sidewalk and watches all day beneath his Dulcinea's balcony; or he talks to her across the opera-house or bull-ring with cigarette, fingers, and cane, she replying with studied movements of her fan. In the empire of Mohammed, with a hundred eyes on watch—eyes of eunuchs, spies, and parents—

love-making is reduced to a passing glance, brief as a flash of light, and sometimes as blinding.

That was all that took place when the two caïques passed—just a thinning of the silken veil, with only one fold of the yashmak slipped over the eyes, softening the fire of their beauty; then a quick, all-enfolding, all-absorbing look, as if she would drink into her very soul the man she loved, and the two tiny boats kept each on its way.

The second act of the comedy opens in a small cove, an indent of the Bosphorus, out of sight of passing boat-patrols—out of sight, too, of inquisitive wayfarers passing along the highroad from Beicos to Danikeui. Above the cove, running from the very beach, sweeps a garden, shaded by great trees and tangles of underbrush; one bunch smothering a summer-house. This is connected by a sheltered path with the little white house that nestles among the firs half-way up the steep brown hill that overlooks the village of Beicos.

The water-patrol may have been friendly, or my lady's favorite slave resourceful, but almost every night for weeks the first caïque and the second caïque had lain side by side in the boat-house in the cove, both empty, except for one trusty man who loved Mahmoud and who did his bidding without murmur or question, no matter what the danger.

Higher up, her loose white robes splashed with the molten silver of the moon filtering through overhanging leaves, where even the nightingale stopped to listen, could be heard the cooing of two voices. Then would come a warning cry, and a figure closely veiled would speed up the path. Next could be heard the splash of oars of the first caïque homeward bound.

Locksmiths are bunglers in the East compared to patrols and eunuchs. Lovers may smile, but they never laugh at them. There is always a day of reckoning. A whisper goes around; some disgruntled servant shakes his head; and an old fellow with baggy trousers and fez, says: "My daughter, I am surprised" or "pained" or "outraged," or whatever he does say in polite Turkish, Arabic, or Greek, and my lady is locked up on bread and water, or fig-paste, or Turkish Delight, and all is over. Sometimes the young Lothario is ordered back to his regiment, or sent to Van or Trebizond or Egypt for the good of his morals, or his health or the community in which he lives. Sometimes everybody accepts the situation and the banns are called and they live happy ever after.

What complicated this situation was that the girl, although as beautiful as a dream—any number of dreams, for that matter, and all of paradise—was a plebeian and the young man of royal blood. Further-

Her loose white robes splashed with the molten silver of the moon.

more, any number of parents, her own two and twice as many uncles and aunts, might get together and give, not only their blessing, but lands and palaces—two on the Bosphorus, one in Bagdad and another at Smyrna, and nothing would avail unless his Imperial Highness the Sultan gave his consent. Futhermore, again, should it come to the ears of his August Presence that any such scandalous alliance was in contemplation, several yards of additional bow-strings would be purchased and the whole coterie experience a choking sensation which would last them the balance of their lives.

Thus it was that, after that most blissful night in the arbor—their last—in which she had clung to him as if knowing he was about to slip forever from her arms, both caïques were laid up for the season; the first tight locked and guarded in the palace of the young man's father, five miles along the blue Bosphorus as the bird flies, and the second in the little boat-house in the small indent of a cove under the garden holding the beloved arbor, the little white house, and My Lady of the diaphanous veil and the all-absorbing eyes.

With the lifting of the curtain on the third act, the scene shifts. No more Sweet Waters, no more caïques nor stolen interviews, the music of hot kisses drowned in the splash of the listening fountain. In-

stead, there is seen a sumptuously furnished interior the walls wainscoted in Moorish mosaics and lined by broad divans covered with silken rugs. Small tables stand about holding trays of cigarettes and sweets. Over against a window overlooking a garden lounges a group of women—some young, some old, one or two of them black as coal. It is the harem of the Pasha, the father of Mahmoud, Prince of the Rising Sun, Chosen of the Faithful, Governor of a province, and of forty other things beside—most of which Joe had forgotten.

Months had passed since that night in the arbor. Yuleima had cried her eyes out, and Mahmoud had shaken his fists and belabored his head, swearing by the beard of the Prophet that come what might Yuleima should be his.

Then came the death of the paternal potentate, and the young lover was free—free to come and go, to love, to hate; free to follow the carriage of his imperial master in his race up the hill after the ceremony of the Selamlik; free to choose any number of Yuleimas for his solace; free to do whatever pleased him—except to make the beautiful Yuleima his spouse. This the High-Mightinesses forbade. There were no personal grounds for their objection. The daughter of the rich Bagdad merchant was as gentle as a doe, beautiful as a star seen through the soft

mists of the morning, and of stainless virtue. Her father had ever been a loyal subject, giving of his substance to both church and state, but there were other things to consider, among them a spouse especially selected by a council of High Pan-Jams, whose decision, having been approved by their imperial master, was not only binding, but final—so final that death awaited any one who would dare oppose it. At the feast of Ramazan the two should wed. Yuleima might take second, third, or fortieth place—but not first.

The young prince gritted his row of white teeth and flashed his slumbering eyes—and they could flash—blaze sometimes—with a fire that scorched. Yuleima would be his, unsullied in his own eyes and the world's, or she should remain in the little white house on the brown hill and continue to blur her beautiful eyes with the tears of her grief.

Then the favorite slave and the faithful *caïque-ji* —the one who found the little cove even on the darkest night—put their heads together—two very cunning and wise heads, one black and wrinkled and the other sun-tanned and yellow—with the result that one night a new odalisque, a dark-skinned, black-haired houri, the exact opposite of the fair-skinned, fair-haired Yuleima, joined the coterie in the harem of the palace of the prince. She had been bought

with a great price and smuggled into Stamboul, the story ran, a present from a distinguished friend of his father, little courtesies like this being common in Oriental countries, as one would send a bottle of old Madeira from his cellar or a choice cut of venison from his estate, such customs as is well known being purely a matter of geography.

The chief blackamoor, a shambling, knock-kneed, round-shouldered, swollen-paunched apology for a man, with blistered, cracked lips, jaundiced pig eyes, and the skin of a terrapin, looked her all over, grunted his approval, and with a side-lunge of his fat empty head, indicated the divan which was to be hers during the years of her imprisonment.

One night some words passed between the two over the division of bonbons, perhaps, or whose turn it was to take afternoon tea with the prince—it had generally been the new houri's, resulting in considerable jealousy and consequent discord—or some trifle of that sort (Joe had never been in a harem, and was therefore indefinite), when the blackamoor, to punctuate his remarks, slashed the odalisque across her thinly covered shoulders with a knout—a not uncommon mode of enforcing discipline, so Joe assured me.

Then came the great scene of the third act—always the place for it, so dramatists say.

The dark-skinned houri sprang up, rose to her

full height, her eyes blazing, and facing her tormentor, cried:

"You blackguard"—a true statement—"do you know who I am?"

"Yes, perfectly; you are Yuleima, the daughter of the Bagdad merchant."

The fourth act takes place on the outskirts of Stamboul, in a small house surrounded by a high wall which connects with the garden of a mosque. The exposure by the eunuch had resulted in an investigation by the palace clique, which extended to the Bagdad merchant and his family, who, in explanation, not only denounced her as an ungrateful child, cursing her for her opposition to her sovereign's will, but denied all knowledge of her whereabouts. They supposed, they pleaded, that she had thrown herself into the Bosphorus at the loss of her lover. Then followed the bundling up of Yuleima in the still watches of the night; her bestowal at the bottom of a caïque, her transfer to Stamboul, and her incarceration in charge of an attendant in a deserted house belonging to the mosque. The rumor was then set on foot that it was unlawful to look steadily into the waters of the Bosphorus or to attempt the salvage of any derelict body floating by.

The prince made another assault on his hair and tightened his fingers, this time with a movement as

if he was twisting them round somebody's throat, but he made no outery. It is hard to kick against the pricks in some lands.

He did not believe the bow-string pillow-case and solid-shot story, but he knew that he should never look upon her face again. What he did believe was that she had been taken to some distant city and there sold.

For days he shut himself up in his palace. Then, having overheard a conversation in his garden between two eunuchs—placed there for that purpose—he got together a few belongings, took his faithful *caïque-ji,* and travelled a-field. If what he had heard was true she was in or near Damascus. Here would he go. If, after searching every nook and cranny, he failed to find her, he would return and carry out his sovereign's commands and marry the princess—a woman he had never laid his eyes on and who might be as ugly as sin and as misshapen as Yuleima was beautiful. It was while engaged in this fruitless search that he met Joseph, to whom he had poured out his heart (so Joe assured me, with his hand on his shirt-front), hoping to enlist his sympathies and thus gain his assistance.

All this time the heartbroken girl, rudely awakened from her dream of bliss, was a prisoner in the deserted house next the mosque. As the dreary

months went by her skin regained its pinkness and her beautiful hair its golden tint,—walnut shells and cosmetics not being found in the private toilet of the priests and their companions. When the summer came a greater privilege was given her. She could never speak to any one and no one could speak to her—even the priests knew this—but a gate opening into the high-walled garden was left unlocked now and then by one of the kind-hearted Mohammedans, and often she would wander as far as the end of the wall overlooking the Mosque of Suleiman, her attendant always with her—a black woman appointed by Chief-of-Police Selim, and responsible for her safety, and who would pay forfeit with her head if Yuleima escaped.

"And you think now, effendi," concluded Joe, as he drained his last cup of coffee (Hornstog's limit was twenty cups at intervals of three minutes each), "that Joe be big damn fool to put his foots in this—what you call—steel trap? No, no, we keep away. To-morrow, don't it, we take Yusuf and go Scutari? One beautiful fountain at Scutari like you never see!"

"But can't her father help?" I asked, ignoring his suggestion. His caution did not interest me. It was the imprisoned girl and her suffering that occupied my thoughts.

"Yes, perhaps, but not yet. I somethings hear one day from the gardener who live with her father, but maybe it all lie. He say Serim come and say—" Again Joe chafed his thumb and forefinger, after the manner of the paying teller. "Maybe ten thousand piastres—maybe twenty. Her father would pay, of course, only the Sultan might not like—then worse trouble—nothing will be done anyhow until the wedding is over. Then, perhaps, some time."

I did not go to Scutari the next day. I opened my easel in the *patio* of the Pigeon Mosque and started in to paint the plaza with Cleopatra's Needle in the distance. This would occupy the morning. In the afternoon I would finish my sketch of Suleiman. Should Joe have a fresh attack of ague he could join Yusuf at the café and forget it in the thimbelful that cheers but does not inebriate.

With the setting up of my tripod and umbrella and the opening of my color-box a crowd began to gather—market people, fruit-sellers, peddlers, scribes, and soldiers. Then a shrill voice rang out from one of the minarets calling the people to prayer. A group of priests now joined the throng about me, watched me for a moment, consulted together, and then one of them, an old man in a silken robe of corn-yellow bound about with a broad sash of baby blue, a majestic old man, with a certain rhythmic

movement about him which was enchanting, laid his hand on Joseph's shoulder and looking into his eyes, begged him to say to his master that the making of pictures of any living or dead thing, especially mosques, was contrary to their religion, and that the effendi must fold his tent.

All this time another priest, an old patriarch with a fez and green turban and Nile-green robe overlaid with another of rose-pink, was scrutinizing my face. Then the corn-yellow fellow and the rose-pink patriarch put their heads together, consulted for a moment, made me a low bow, performed the flying-fingers act, and floated off toward the mosque.

"You no go 'way, effendi," explained Joe. "The priest in green turban say he remember you; he say you holy man who bow yourselluf humble when dead man go by. No stop paint."

The protests of the priests, followed by their consultation and quiet withdrawal, packed the crowd the closer. One young man in citizen's dress and fez stood on the edge of the throng trying to understand the cause of the excitement.

Joe, who was sitting by me assisting with the water-cup, gazed into the intruder's face a moment, then closed upon my arm with a grip as if he'd break it.

"Allah! Mahmoud Bey!" he whispered. "Yuleima's prince. That's him with the smooth face."

The next instant the young man stood by my side.

"The people are only curious, monsieur," he said in French. "If they disturb you I will have them sent away. So few painters come—you are the first I have seen in many years. If it will not annoy you, I'd like to watch you a while."

"Annoy me, my dear sir!" I was on my feet now, hat in hand. (If he had been my long-lost brother, stolen by the Indians or left on a desert island to starve—or any or all of those picturesque and dramatic things—I could not have been more glad to see him. I fairly hugged myself—it seemed too good to be true.) "I will be more than delighted if you will take my dragoman's stool. Get up, Joe, and give——"

The request had already been forestalled. Joe was not only up, but was bowing with the regularity and precision of the arms of a windmill, his fingers, with every rise, fluttering between his shirt-stud and his eyebrows. On his second upsweep the young prince got a view of his face—then his hand went out.

"Why, it is Hornstog! We know each other. We met in Damascus. You could not, monsieur, find a better dragoman in all Constantinople."

Only three pairs of eyes now followed the movements of my brush, the crowd having fallen back out

of respect for the young man's rank, Yusuf having communicated that fact to those who had not recognized him.

When the light changed—and it changed unusually early that morning, about two hours ahead of time (I helped)—I said to the prince:

"It may interest you to see me finish a sketch in color. Come with me as far as Suleiman. We can sit quite out of the sun up a little back street under a wall, and away from everybody. I began the drawing yesterday. See!" and I uncovered the canvas.

"Ah, Suleimanyeh! The most beautiful of all our mosques. Yes, certainly I'll go."

Joe dug his knuckles into my thigh, under pretence of steadying himself—he was squatting beside me like a frog, helping with the water-cups—and gasped: "No; don't take him—please, effendi! No—no——"

I brushed Joe aside and continued: "We can send for coffee and spend the afternoon. I'll have some chairs brought from the café. Pick up everything, Joe, and come along."

On the way to the crooked, break-neck street my thoughts went racing through my head. On one side, perhaps, a tap on the shoulder in the middle of the night; half a yard of catgut in the hands of a Bashi-Bazouk; an appeal to our consul, with the conscious-

ness of having meddled with something that did not concern me. On the other a pair of tear-stained, pleading eyes. Not my eyes—not the eyes of anybody that I knew—but the kind that raise the devil even in the heart of a staid old painter like myself.

Joe followed, with downcast gaze. He, too, was scheming. He could not protest before the prince, nor before Yusuf. That would imply previous knowledge of the danger lurking in the vicinity of the old wall. His was the devil and the deep sea. Not to tell the prince of Yuleima's whereabouts, after their combined search for her, and the fees the prince had paid him, would be as cruel as it was disloyal. To assist in Mahmoud's finding her would bring down upon his own head—if it was still on his shoulders—the wrath of the chief of police, as well as the power behind him.

Once under the shadow of the wall, the trap unpacked, easel and umbrella up, and water-bottle filled, Joe started his windmill, paused at the third *kotow,* looked me straight in the eye, and, with a tone in his voice, as if he had at last come to some conclusion, made this request:

"I have no eat breakfast, effendi—very hungry—you please permit Joe go café with Yusuf—we stay *one* hour, no more. Then I bring coffee. You see me when I come—I bring the coffee myselluf."

He could not have pleased me more. How to get rid of them both was what had been bothering me.

I painted on, both of us backed into the low gate with the sliding panel, my eyes on the mosque, my ears open for the slightest sound. We talked of the wonderful architecture of the East, of the taper of the minarets, of the grace and dignity of the priests, of the social life of the people, I leading and he following, until I had brought the conversation down to the question:

"And when you young men decide to marry are you free to choose, as we Europeans are?" I was feeling about, wondering how much of his confidence he would give me.

"No; that's why, sometimes, I wish I was like one of the white gulls that fly over the water."

"I don't understand."

"I would be out at sea with my mate—that's what I mean."

"Have you a mate?"

"I had. She is lost."

"Dead?"

"Worse."

I kept at work. White clouds sailed over the mosque; a flurry of pigeons swept by; the air blew fresh. With the exception of my companion and myself the street was deserted. I dared not go any

further in my inquiries. If I betrayed any more interest or previous knowledge he might think I was in league against him.

"The girl, then, suffers equally with the man?" I said, tightening one of the legs of my easel.

"More. He can keep his body clean; she must often barter hers in exchange for her life. A woman doesn't count much in Turkey. This is one of the things we young men who have seen something of the outside world—I lived a year in Paris—will improve when we get the power," and his eyes flashed.

"And yet it is dangerous to help one of them to escape, is it not?"

"Yes."

The hour was nearly up. Joe, I knew, had fixed it, consulting his watch and comparing it with mine so that I might know the coast was clear during that brief period should anything happen.

"I was tempted to help one yesterday," I answered. "I saw a woman's face that has haunted me ever since. She may not have been in trouble, but she looked so." Then quietly, and as if it was only one of the many incidents that cross a painter's path, I described in minute detail the gate, the sliding panel, the veiled face and wondrous eyes, the approach of the officer, the smothered cry of terror, the black finger and thumb that reached out, and the

noiseless closing of the panel. What I omitted was all reference to Joe or his knowledge of the girl.

Mahmoud was staring into my eyes now.

"Where was this?"

"Just behind you. Lift your head—that seam marks the sliding panel. She may come again when she sees the top of my umbrella over the wall. Listen! That's her step. She has some one with her —crouch down close. There's only room for her head. You may see her then without her attendant knowing you are here. Quick! she is sliding the panel!"

Outside of Paris, overlooking the Seine, high up on a hill, stands the Bellevue—a restaurant known to half the world. Sweeping down from the perfectly appointed tables lining the rail of the broad piazza; skimming the tree-tops, the plain below, the twisting river, rose-gold in the twilight, the dots of parks and villas, the eye is lost in the distant city and the haze beyond—the whole a-twinkle with myriads of electric lights.

There, one night, from my seat against the opposite wall (I was dining alone), I was amusing myself watching a table being set with more than usual care; some rich American, perhaps, with the world in a sling, or some young Russian running the gauntlet of the dressing-rooms. Staid old painters like myself

take an interest in these things. They serve to fill his note-book, and sometimes help to keep him young.

When I looked again the waiter was drawing out a chair for a woman with her back to me. In the half-light, her figure, in silhouette against the cluster of candles lighting the table, I could see that she was young and, from the way she took her seat, wonderfully graceful. Opposite her, drawing out his own chair, stood a young man in evening dress, his head outlined against the low, twilight sky. It was Mahmoud!

I sprang from my seat and walked straight toward them. There came a low cry of joy, and then four outstretched arms—two of them tight-locked about my neck.

"Tell me," I asked, when we had seated ourselves, Yuleima's hands still clinging to mine. "After I left you that last night in the garden, was the boat where we hid it?"

"Yes."

"Who rowed you to the steamer?"

"My old *caïque-ji.*"

"And who got the tickets and passports?"

"Hornstog."

I could see that she was young.

LORETTA OF THE SHIPYARDS

LORETTA OF THE SHIPYARDS

I

For centuries the painters of Venice have seized and made their own the objects they loved most in this wondrous City by the Sea. Canaletto, ignoring every other beautiful thing, laid hold of quays backed by lines of palaces bordering the Grand Canal, dotted with queer gondolas rowed by gondoliers, in queerer hoods of red or black, depending on the guild to which they belonged. Turner stamped his ownership on sunset skies, silver dawns, illuminations, fêtes, and once in a while on a sweep down the canal past the Salute, its dome a huge incandescent pearl. Ziem tied up to the long wall and water steps of the Public Garden, aflame with sails of red and gold: he is still there—was the last I heard of him, octogenarian as he is. Rico tacks his card to garden walls splashed with the cool shadows of rose-pink oleanders dropping their blossoms into white and green ripples, melting into blue. As for me—I have laid hands on a canal —the Rio Giuseppe—all of it—from the beginning

of the red wall where the sailors land, along its crookednesses to the side entrance of the Public Garden, and so past the rookeries to the lagoon, where the tower of Castello is ready to topple into the sea.

Not much of a canal—not much of a painting ground really, to the masters who have gone before and are still at work, but a truly lovable, lovely, and most enchanting possession to me their humble disciple. Once you get into it you never want to get out, and, once out, you are miserable until you get back again. On one side stretches a row of rookeries—a maze of hanging clothes, fish-nets, balconies hooded by awnings and topped by nondescript chimneys of all sizes and patterns, with here and there a dab of vermilion and light red, the whole brilliant against a china-blue sky. On the other runs the long brick wall of the garden,—soggy, begrimed; streaked with moss and lichen in bands of black-green and yellow ochre, over which mass and sway the great sycamores that Ziem loves, their lower branches interwoven with zinnober cedars gleaming in spots where the prying sun drips gold.

Only wide enough for a *barca* and two gondolas to pass—this canal of mine. Only deep enough to let a wine barge through; so narrow you must go all the way back to the lagoon if you would turn your gondola; so short you can row through it in five

I have laid hands on a canal—the Rio Giusseppe.

minutes; every inch of its water surface part of everything about it, so clear are the reflections; full of moods, whims, and fancies, this wave space—one moment in a broad laugh coquetting with a bit of blue sky peeping from behind a cloud, its cheeks dimpled with sly undercurrents, the next swept by flurries of little winds, soft as the breath of a child on a mirror; then, when aroused by a passing boat, breaking out into ribbons of color—swirls of twisted doorways, flags, awnings, flower-laden balconies, black-shawled Venetian beauties all upside down, interwoven with strips of turquoise sky and green waters—a bewildering, intoxicating jumble of tatters and tangles, maddening in detail, brilliant in color, harmonious in tone: the whole scintillating with a picturesqueness beyond the ken or brush of any painter living or dead.

On summer days—none other for me in Venice (the other fellow can have it in winter)—everybody living in the rookeries camps out on the quay, the women sitting in groups stringing beads, the men flat on the pavement mending their nets. On its edge, hanging over the water, reaching down, holding on by a foot or an arm to the iron rail, are massed the children—millions of children—I never counted them, but still I say millions of children. This has gone on since I first staked out my claim—

was a part of the inducement, in fact, that decided me to move in and take possession—boats, children, still water, and rookeries being the ingredients from which I concoct color combinations that some misguided people take home and say they feel better for.

If you ask me for how many years I have been sole owner of this stretch of water I must refer you to Loretta, who had lived just five summers when my big gondolier, Luigi, pulled her dripping wet from the canal, and who had lived eleven more—sixteen, in all—when what I have to tell you happened.

And yet, Loretta's little mishap, now I come to think of it, does not go back far enough. My claim was really staked out before she was born (I am still in possession—that is—I was last year, and hope to be this), and her becoming part of its record is but the sticking of two pins along a chart,—the first marking her entrance at five and the second her exit at sixteen. All the other years of my occupation—those before her coming and since her going—were, of course, full of the kind of joy that comes to a painter, but these eleven years—well, these had all of this joy and then, too, they had—Loretta.

I was in the bow of the gondola when the first of these two pins found its place on the chart, working away like mad, trying to get the exact shadow tones on a sun-flecked wall. Luigi was aft, fast asleep, his

elbow under his head: I never object, for then he doesn't shake the boat. Suddenly from out the hum of the children's voices there came a scream vibrant with terror. Then a splash! Then the gondola swayed as if a *barca* had bumped it, and the next thing I knew Luigi's body made a curve through the air, struck the water, with an enormous souse, and up came Loretta, her plump, wet little body resting as easily on Luigi's hand, as a tray rests on a waiter's. Another sweep with his free arm, and he passed me the dripping child and clambered up beside her. The whole affair had not occupied two minutes.

That was a great day for me!

Heretofore I had been looked upon as a squatter: possessing certain rights, of course, and more or less welcome because of sundry *lire* expended for the temporary use of fishing boats with sails up,—but still an interloper. Now I became one of the thousand families and the million children. These were all in evidence in less than ten seconds; the peculiar quality of that scream had done it; not only from the top story of the highest rookery did they swarm, but from every near-by *campo,* and way back to the shipyards.

Luigi pushed the gondola to the quay and I lifted out the water-soaked, blue-lipped little tot,

her hair flattened against her cheeks (she was laughing now,—"It was nothing," she said, "my foot slipped,") and placed her in the hands of the longest-armed fishwife; and then Luigi disappeared into a door, level with the quay, from which he reappeared ten minutes later in a suit of dry clothes, the property of a fisherman, and of so grotesque a fit, the trousers reaching to his knees and the cuffs of the coat to his elbows, that he set the population in a roar. My Luigi, you might as well know, is six feet and an inch, with the torso of a Greek god and a face that is twin to Colleone's, and, furthermore, is quite as distinguished looking as that gentleman on horseback, even if he does wear a straw hat instead of a copper helmet. After this Loretta became part of my establishment, especially at luncheon time, Luigi hunting her up and bringing her aboard in his arms, she clinging to his grizzled, sunburned neck. Often she would spend the rest of the day watching me paint.

All I knew of her antecedents and life outside of these visits was what Luigi told me. She was born, he said, in the shipyards, and at the moment lived in the top of the rookery nearest the bridge. She had an only sister, who was ten years older; the mother was the wife of a crab fisherman who had died some years before; the two children and mother were

cared for by a brother crab fisherman. His son Francesco, if report were true, was to marry the sister when she turned fifteen, Francesco being four years older. This last reference to Francesco came with a shake of the head and a certain expression in Luigi's eyes which told me at once that his opinion of the prospective groom was not for publication—a way he has when he dislikes somebody and is too polite to express it.

"Fishes for crabs, like his father?" I asked.

"Yes, crabs and young girls," he answered with a frown. "A poor lot, these crab catchers, Signore. Was it the charcoal or a brush you wanted?"

Francesco did not interest me,—nor did the grown-up sister; nor the mother, over whom Luigi also shrugged his shoulders. It was Loretta's chubbiness that delighted my soul.

Even at five she was a delightful little body, and full of entrancing possibilities. One can always tell what the blossom will be from the bud. In her case, all the essentials of beauty were in evidence: dark, lustrous velvety eyes; dazzling teeth—not one missing; jet-black hair—and such a wealth of it, almost to her shoulders; a slender figure, small hands and feet; neat, well-turned ankles and wrists, and rounded plump arms above the elbows.

"What do you intend to do, little one, when you

grow up?" I asked her one morning. She was sitting beside me, her eyes following every movement of my brush.

"Oh, what everybody does. I shall string beads and then when I get big like my sister I shall go to the priest and get married, and have a ring and new shoes and a beautiful, beautiful veil all over my hair."

"So! And have you picked him out yet?"

"Oh, no, Signore! Why, I am only a little girl. But he will surely come,—they always come."

These mornings in the gondola continued until she was ten years old. Sometimes it was a melon held high in the air that tempted her; or a basket of figs, or some huge bunches of grapes; or a roll and a broiled fish from a passing cook-boat: but the bait always sufficed. With a little cry of joy the beads would be dropped, or the neighbor's child passed to another or whatever else occupied her busy head and small hands, and away she would run to the water steps and hold out her arms until Luigi rowed over and lifted her in. She had changed, of course, in these five years, and was still changing, but only as an expanding bud changes. The eyes were the same and so were the teeth—if any had dropped out, newer and better ones had taken their places; the hair though was richer, fuller, longer, more like coils of

liquid jet, with a blue sheen where the sky lights touched its folds. The tight, trim little figure, too, had loosened out in certain places—especially about the chest and hips. Before many years she would flower into the purest type of the Venetian—the most beautiful woman the world knows.

At sixteen she burst into bloom.

I have never seen a black tulip, not a real velvet-black, but if inside its shroud of glossy enfoldings—so like Loretta's hair—there lies enshrined a mouth red as a pomegranate and as enticing, and if above it there burn two eyes that would make a holy man clutch his rosary; and if the flower sways on its stalk with the movement of a sapling caressed by a summer breeze;—then the black tulip is precisely the kind of flower that Loretta bloomed into.

And here the real trouble began,—just as it begins for every other pretty Venetian, and here, too, must I place the second pin in my chart.

It all came through Francesco. The older sister had died with the first child, and this crab catcher had begun to stretch out his claws for Loretta. She and her mother still lived with Francesco's father, who was a widower. The mother kept the house for all,—had done so for Francesco and her daughter during their brief married life.

In her persecution Loretta would pour out her

heart to Luigi, telling how they bothered her,—her mother the most of all. She hated Francesco,—hated his father,—hated everybody who wanted her to marry the fisherman. (Luigi, poor fellow, had lost his only daughter when she was five years of age, which accounted, I always thought, for his interest in the girl.)

One morning she called to him and waited on the quay until he could hail a passing *barca* and step from the gondola to its deck and so ashore. Then the two disppeared through the gate of the garden.

"She is too pretty to go alone," he explained on his return. "Every day she must pay a boy two *soldi,* Signore, to escort her to the lace factory—the boy is sick today and so I went with her. But their foolishness will stop after this;—these rats know Luigi."

From this day on Loretta had the Riva to herself.

II

So far there has been introduced into this story the bad man, Francesco, with crab-like tendencies, who has just lost his wife; the ravishingly beautiful Loretta; the girl's mother, of whom all sorts of stories were told—none to her credit; big tender-hearted Luigi Zanaletto, prince of gondoliers, and last, and

this time least, a staid old painter who works in a gondola up a crooked canal which is smothered in trees, choked by patched-up boats and flanked by tattered rookeries so shaky that the slightest earth quiver would tumble them into kindling wood.

There enters now another and much more important character,—one infinitely more interesting to my beautiful Lady of the Shipyards than any grandfather gondolier or staid old painter who ever lived. This young gentleman is twenty-one; has a head like the Hermes, a body like the fauns, and winsome, languishing eyes with a light in their depths which have set the heart of every girl along his native Giudecca pitapatting morning, noon, and night. He enjoys the distinguished name of Vittorio Borodini, and is the descendant of a family of gondoliers—of the guild of the Castellani—who can trace their ancestral calling back some two hundred years (so can Luigi; but then Luigi never speaks of it, and the Borodinis always do). Being aristocrats, the Zanalettos and Borodinis naturally fraternize, and as they live in the same quarter—away up on the Giudecca—two miles from my canal—the fathers of Vittorio and Luigi have become intimate friends. Anything, therefore, touching the welfare of any one of the descendants of so honorable a guild is more or less vital to the members of both families.

At the moment something *had* touched a Borodino—and in the most vital of spots. This was nothing less than the heart of young Vittorio, the pride and hope of his father. He had seen the "Rose of the Shipyards," as she was now called, pass the *traghetto* of the Molo, off which lay his gondola awaiting custom,—it was on one of the days when the two-*soldi* boy acted as chaperon,—and his end had come.

It had only been a flash from out the lower corner of the left eye of Loretta as she floated along past the big columns of the Palazzo of the Doges, but it had gone through the young gondolier and out on the other side, leaving a wound that nothing would heal. She had not intended to hurt him, or even to attract him;—he only happened to be in the way when her search-light illumined his path.

Vittorio knew at a glance that she came from the rookeries and that he, the scion of a noble family, should look higher for his mate, but that made no difference. She was built for him and he was built for her, and that was the end of it: not for an intrigue—he was not constructed along those lines—but with a ring and a priest and all the rest of it. The main difficulty was to find some one who knew her. He would not,—could not, confront her; nor

would he follow her home; but something must be done, and at once: a conclusion, it will be admitted, than an incalculable number of young Vittorios have reached, sooner or later, the world over.

When, therefore, a rumor came to his ears that Luigi the Primo was protecting her—the kind of protection that could never be misunderstood in Luigi's case—a piece of news which his informer was convinced would end the projected intrigue of the young gondolier, then and there and for all time, Vittorio laughed so loud and so long, and so merrily, that he lost, in consequence, two fares to San Giorgio, and came near being reprimanded by the Gastaldo for his carelessness.

That was why late one afternoon (I was painting the sunset glow) just as Loretta reached the edge of the quay on her way home, a young fellow, in white duck with a sash of dark red silk binding and hanging from his waist and a rakish straw hat tipped over his handsome face, shot his gondola alongside mine and leaned over to whisper something in Luigi's ear. And that was why the girl in her long black shawl stopped, and why Luigi immediately changed gondolas and made for the quay, and why they all talked together for a moment, the girl flashing and the boy beaming, and that was why, too, they all three disappeared a moment later in the direction of the high rookery

where lived the baffled, love-sick Francesco, his anxious father, the much-talked-about mother, and the Rose of the Shipyards.

In a garden where the soil is so rich that a seedling of five—a mere slip—blooms into flower before a foolish old painter can exhaust the subjects along the canal, it is not surprising that a love affair reaches its full growth between two suns. Not since the day she had tumbled into the canal had she gone so head-over-heels—both of them. Nor did Luigi pull them out. He helped in the drowning, really.

He was talking to himself when he came back—a soft light in his eyes, a smile lingering around the corners of his up-turned, grizzled mustache.

"It is good to be young, Signore, is it not?" was all he said, and at once began bundling up my traps.

Before the week was out,—nay, before the setting of two suns—every gossip along the Riva—and they about covered the population—had become convinced that Loretta was lost to the Quarter. Unless a wedding ring was to end it all Vittorio would never be so bold in his attentions to Loretta, as to walk home with her nights and wait for her mornings.

Luigi shook his head, but he did not help the gossips solve the problem. He had had trouble enough already with Vittorio's father.

"A common wench from the yards, I hear, Luigi!" he had blazed out—"and you, I understand, brought them together—you,—who have been my friend for——"

"Stop, Borodini! Not another word! You are angry, and when you are angry you are stupid. I carried that girl in my arms when she was a baby! I have watched over her ever since. A wench! Not one of your own daughters has a heart so white. If Vittorio is so great a coward as to listen to their talk I'll keep her for his betters."

All this snapped out of Luigi's eyes and rolled from under his crisp mustache as he repeated the outbreak to me. What the end might be neither the Giudecca nor San Giuseppe could decide. The Borodinis were proud; Vittorio's father was one of the gondoliers belonging to the palace and always rowed the good Queen Margherita when she came incognito to Venice,—a post which greatly enhanced his social station. Vittorio was the only son, and already a member of the *traghetto,* young as he was. But then, were there any girls better than Loretta, or as good? She helped her mother; she paid her share of the rent to Francesco's father; she gave to the poor box. That she was the sunshine of the Quarter every one knew who heard her sweet, cheery voice. As to her family, it was true that her mother was a Sicilian

who boiled over sometimes in a tempest of rage, like Vesuvius,—but her father had been one of them. And then again, was she not the chosen friend of Luigi, the Primo, and of the crazy painter who haunted the canal? The boy and his father might be glad, etc., etc.

The only persons who were oblivious to the talk were the two lovers. Their minds were made up. Father Garola had promised, and they knew exactly what to do, and when and where to do it. In the meantime the Riva was a pathway of rose-tinted clouds constructed for the especial use of two angels, one of whom wore a straw hat with a red ribbon canted over his sunburnt face, and the other a black shawl with silken fringe, whose every movement suggested a caress.

The one disgruntled person was Francesco.

He had supposed at first that, like the others, Vittorio would find out his mistake;—certainly when he looked closely into the pure eyes of the girl, and that then, like the others, he would give up the chase;—he not being the first gay Lothario who had been taught just such a lesson.

Loretta's answer to the schemer, given with a toss of her head and a curl of her lips, closed Francesco's mouth and set his brain in a whirl. In his astonishment he had long talks with his father, the two

seated in their boat against the Garden wall so no one could overhear.

Once he approached Luigi and began a tale, first about Vittorio and his escapades and then about Loretta and her coquetry, which Luigi strangled with a look, and which he did not discuss or repeat to me, except to remark—"They have started in to bite, Signore," the meaning of which I could but guess at. At another time he and his associates concocted a scheme by which Vittorio's foot was to slip as he was leaving Loretta at the door, and he be fished out of the canal with his pretty clothes begrimed with mud;—a scheme which was checked when they began to examine the young gondolier the closer, and which was entirely abandoned when they learned that his father was often employed about the palace of the king. In these projected attacks, strange to say, the girl's mother took part. Her hope in keeping her home was in Loretta's marrying Francesco.

Then, dog as he was, he tried the other plan—all this I got from Luigi, he sitting beside me, sharpening charcoal points, handing me a fresh brush, squeezing out a tube of color on my palette: nothing like a romance to a staid old painter; and then, were not both of us in the conspiracy as abettors, and up to our eyes in the plot?

This other plan was to traduce the girl. So the

gondoliers on the *traghetto* began to talk,—behind their hands, at first: She had lived in Francesco's house; she had had a dozen young fishermen trapesing after her; her mother, too, was none too good. Then again, you could never trust these Neapolitans,—the kitten might be like the cat, etc., etc.

Still the lovers floated up and down the Riva, their feet on clouds, their heads in the heavens. Never a day did he miss, and always with a wave of her hand to me as they passed: down to Malamocco on Sundays with another girl as chaperon, or over to Mestre by boat for the *festa,* coming home in the moonlight, the tip of his cigarette alone lighting her face.

One morning—the lovers had only been waiting for their month's pay—Luigi came sailing down the canal to my lodgings, his gondola in gala attire,—bunches of flowers tied at each corner of the *tenda;* a mass of blossoms in the lamp socket; he himself in his best white suit, a new red sash around his waist—his own colors—and off we went to San Rosario up the Giudecca. And the Borodinis turned out in great force, and so did all the other *'inis,* and *'olas,* and *'ninos*—dozens of them—and in came Loretta, so beautiful that everybody held his breath; and we all gathered about the altar, and good Father Garola stepped down and took their hands;

and two candles were lighted and a little bell rang; and then somebody signed a book—somebody with the bearing of a prince—Borodini, I think—and then Luigi, his rich, sunburned face and throat in contrast with his white shirt, moved up and affixed his name to the register; and then a door opened on the side and they all went out into the sunlight.

I followed and watched the gay procession on its way to the waiting boats. As I neared the corner of the church a heavily-built young fellow ran past me, crouched to the pavement, and hid himself behind one of the tall columns. Something in his dress and movement made me stop. Not being sure, I edged nearer and waited until he turned his head. It was Francesco.

III

The skies were never more beautiful that May, the blossoms of the oleanders and the almond trees never more lovely. Not only was my own canal alive with the stir and fragrance of the coming summer, but all Venice bore the look of a bride who had risen from her bath, drawn aside the misty curtain of the morning, and stood revealed in all her loveliness.

The sun shone everywhere, I say, but to me its brightest rays fell on a garden full of fig trees and

flat arbors interwoven with grapevines, running down to the water where there was a dock and a gondola—two, sometimes,—our own and Vittorio's—and particularly on a low, two-story, flat-roofed house,—a kaleidoscope of color—pink, yellow, and green, with three rooms and a portico, in which lived Vittorio, a bird in a cage, a kitten-cat and the Rose of the Shipyards.

It is a long way round to my canal through San Trovaso to the Zattere and across the Giudecca to Ponte Lungo, and then along the edge of the lagoon to this garden and dovecote, but that is the precise route Luigi, who lived within a stone's throw of the couple, selected morning after morning. He always had an excuse:—he had forgotten the big bucket for my water cups, or the sail, or the extra chair; and would the Signore mind going back for his other oar? Then again the tide was bad, and after all we might as well row down the lagoon; it was easier and really shorter with the wind against us—all nonsense, of course, but I never objected.

"Ah, the Signore and dear Luigi!" she would cry when she caught sight of our gondola rounding into the landing. Then down the path she would skip, the joyous embodiment of beauty and grace, and help me out, Luigi following; and we would stroll up under the fig trees, and she would begin showing

me this and that new piece of furniture, or pot, or kettle, or new bread knife, or scissors, or spoon, which Vittorio had added to their store since my last visit. Or I would find them both busy over the gondola,—he polishing his brasses and *ferro,* and she rehanging the curtains of the *tenda* which she had washed and ironed with her own hands.

In truth it was a very happy little nest that was tucked away in one corner of that old abandoned garden with its outlook on the broad water and its connecting link with the row of neighbors' houses flanking the side canal,—and no birds in or out of any nest in all Venice ever sang so long and so continuously nor were there any others so genuinely happy the livelong day and night as these two.

Did I not know something of the curious mixture of love, jealousy, and suspicion which goes into the making-up of an Italian, it would be hard for me to believe that so lovely a structure as this dovecote, one built with so much hope and alight with so much real happiness, could ever come tumbling to the ground. We Anglo-Saxons flame up indignantly when those we love are attacked, and we demand proofs. "*Critica,*" that bane of Venetian life—what this, that, or the other neighbor tattles to this, that, and the other listener, we dismiss with a wave of the hand, or with

fingers tight clenched close to the offender's lips, or by a blow in the face. Not so the Italian. He also blazes, but he will stop and wonder when his anger has cooled; think of this and that; put two and two together, and make ten of what is really only four. This is what happened to the nest under the grapevines.

I was in my own garden at the Britannia leaning over the marble balcony, wondering what kept Luigi—it was past ten o'clock—when the news reached me. I had caught sight of his white shirt and straw hat as he swung out behind the Salute and headed straight toward me, and saw from the way he gripped his oar and stretched his long body flat with the force of each thrust, that he had a message of importance, even before I saw his face.

"*A Dio,* Signore!" he cried. "What do you think? Vittorio has cursed Loretta, torn her wedding ring from her finger, and thrown it in her face!"

"Vittorio!"

"Yes,—he will listen to nothing! He is a crazy fool and I have done all I could. He believes every one of the lies that crab-catching brute of a Francesco is telling. It would be over by to-night, but Loretta does not take it like the others: she says nothing. You know her eyes—they are not like our Giudecca

girls. They are burning now like two coals of fire, and her cheeks are like chalk."

I had stepped into the gondola by this time, my first thought being how best to straighten out the quarrel.

"Now tell me, Luigi—speak slowly, so I do not miss a word. First, where is Loretta?"

"She was putting on her best clothes when I left—those she bought herself. She will touch nothing Vittorio gave her. She is going back to her mother in an hour."

"But what happened? Has Francesco——?"

"Francesco has not stopped one minute since the wedding. He has been talking to the fish-people,—to everybody on the side street, saying that Loretta was his old shoes that he left at his door, and the fool Vittorio found them and put them on—that sort of talk."

"And Vittorio believes it?"

"He did not at first,—but twice Francesco came to see Loretta with messages from her mother, and went sneaking off when Vittorio came up in his boat, and then that night some one would tell him—'that fellow meets Loretta every day;' that he was her old lover. These people on the Giudecca do not like the San Giuseppe people, and there is always jealousy. If Vittorio had married any one from his own quar-

ter it would have been different. You don't know these people, Signore,—how devilish they can be and how stupid."

"That was why he threw the ring in her face?"

"No and yes. Yesterday was Sunday, and some people came to see her from San Giuseppe, and they began to talk. I was not there; I did not get there until it was all over, but my wife heard it. They were all in the garden, and one word led to another, and he taunted her with seeing Francesco, and she laughed, and that made him furious; and then he said he had heard her mother was a nobody; and then some one spoke up and said that was true—fools all. And then Loretta, she drew herself up straight and asked who it was had said so, and a woman's voice came—'Francesco,—he told me—' and then Vittorio cried— 'And you meet him here. Don't deny it! And you love him, too!—' and then the fool sprang at her and caught her hand and tore the ring from her finger and spat on it and threw it on the ground. He is now at his father's house."

"And she said nothing, Luigi?" The story seemed like some horrible dream.

"No, nor shed a tear. All she did was to keep repeating—'Francesco! Francesco! Francesco!' I got there at daylight this morning and have been there ever since. I told her I was coming for you. She

was sitting in a chair when I went in,—bolt up; she had not been in her bed. She seems like one in a trance—looked at me and held out her hand. I tried to talk to her and tell her it was all a lie, but she only answered—'Ask Francesco,—it is all Francesco,—ask Francesco.' Hurry, Signore,—we will miss her if we go to her house. We will go at once to our canal and wait for her. They have heard nothing down there at San Giuseppe, and you can talk to her without being interrupted, and then I'll get hold of Vittorio. This way, Signore."

I had hardly reached the water landing of my canal ten minutes later when I caught sight of her, coming directly toward me, head up, her lips tight-set, her black shawl curving and floating with every movement of her body—(nothing so wonderfully graceful and nothing so expressive of the wearer's moods as these black shawls of the Venetians). She wore her gala dress—the one in which she was married—white muslin with ribbons of scarlet, her wonderful hair in a heap above her forehead, her long gold earrings glinting in the sunshine. All the lovelight had died out of her eyes. In its place were two deep hollows rimmed about by dark lines, from out which flashed two points of cold steel light.

I sprang from my gondola and held out my hand:

"Sit down, Loretta, and let me talk to you."

She stopped, looked at me in a dazed sort of way, as if she was trying to focus my face so as to recall me to her memory, and said in a determined way:

"No, let me pass. It's too late for all that, Signore. I am——"

"But wait until you hear me."

"I will hear nothing until I find Francesco."

"You must not go near him. Get into the gondola and let Luigi and me take you home."

A dry laugh rose to her lips. "Home! There is no home any more. See! My ring is gone! Francesco is the one I want—now—*now!* He knows I am coming,—I sent him word. Don't hold me, Signore,—don't touch me!"

She was gone before I could stop her, her long, striding walk increasing almost to a run, her black shawl swaying about her limbs as she hurried toward her old home at the end of the quay. Luigi started after her, but I called him back. Nothing could be done until her fury, or her agony, had spent itself. These volcanoes are often short-lived. We looked after her until she had reached the door and had flung herself across the threshold. Then I sent Luigi for my easel and began work.

The events that have made the greatest impression upon me all my life have been those which have

dropped out of the sky,—the unexpected, the incomprehensible,—the unnecessary—the fool things—the damnably idiotic things.

First we heard a cry that caused Luigi to drop canvas and easel, and sent us both flying down the quay toward the rookery. It came from Loretta's mother;—she was out on the sidewalk tearing her hair; calling on God; uttering shriek after shriek. The quay and bridge were a mass of people—some looking with staring eyes, the children hugging their mothers' skirts. Two brawny fishermen were clearing the way to the door. Luigi and I sprang in behind them, and entered the house.

On the stone floor of the room lay the body of Francesco, his head stretched back, one hand clutching the bosom of his shirt. Against the wall stood Loretta; not a quiver on her lips; ghastly white; calm, — the least excited person in the room.

"And you killed him!" I cried.

"Yes,—he thought I came to kiss him—I did, *with this!*" and she tossed a knife on the table.

The days that followed were gray days for Luigi and me. All the light and loveliness were gone from my canal.

They took Loretta to the prison next the Bridge of

Sighs and locked her up in one of the mouldy cells below the water line—dark, dismal pockets where, in the old days, men died of terror.

Vittorio, Luigi, and I met there the next morning. I knew the chief officer, and he had promised me an interview. Vittorio was crying,—rubbing his knuckles in his eyes,—utterly broken up and exhausted. He and Luigi had spent the night together. An hour before, the two had stood at Francesco's bedside in the hospital of San Paulo. Francesco was still alive, and with Father Garola bending over him had repeated his confession to them both. He was madly in love with her, he moaned, and had spread the report hoping that Vittorio would cast her off, and, having no other place to go, Loretta would come back to him. At this Vittorio broke into a rage and would have strangled the dying man had not the attendant interfered. All this I learned from Luigi as we waited for the official.

"This is a frightful ending to a happy life—" I began when the officer appeared. "Let them talk to each other for just a few moments. It can do no harm."

The official shook his head. "It is against orders, Signore, I cannot. He can see her when she is brought up for examination."

"They will both have lost their senses by that

time," I pleaded. "Can't you think of some way? I have known her from a child. Perhaps an order from headquarters might be of some use." We were standing, at the time, in a long corridor ending in a door protected by an iron grating. This led to the underground cells.

The chief fastened his eyes on me for an instant, turned abruptly, called to an attendant, gave an order in a low voice and, with the words to Vittorio—"You are not to speak to her, remember," motioned the sobbing man toward the grating. Luigi and I followed.

She came slowly out of the shadows, first the drawn face peering ahead, as if wondering why she had been sent for, then the white crumpled dress, and then the dark eyes searching the gloom of the corridor. Vittorio had caught sight of her and was clinging to the grating, his body shaking, his tears blinding him.

The girl gave a half-smothered cry, darted forward and covered Vittorio's hands with her own. Some whispered word must have followed, for the old light broke over her face and she would have cried out for joy had not Luigi cautioned her. For a moment the two stood with fingers intertwined, their bowed foreheads kept apart by the cold grating. Then the boy, straining his face between the bars, as if to reach her

lips, loosened one hand, took something from his pocket and slipped it over her finger.

It was her wedding ring.

IV

Summer has faded, the gold of autumn has turned to brown, and the raw, cold winds of winter have whirled the dead leaves over rookeries, quay, and garden. The boats rock at their tethers and now and then a sea gull darts through the canal and sweeps on to the lagoon. In the narrow opening fronting the broad waters lawless waves quarrel and clash, forcing their way among the frightened ripples of San Giuseppe, ashy gray under the lowering sky.

All these months a girl has clung to an iron grating or has lain on a pallet in one corner of her cell. Once in a while she presses her lips to a ring on her left hand, her face lighting up. Sometimes she breaks out into a song, continuing until the keeper checks her.

Then spring comes.

And with it the painter from over the sea.

All the way from Milan as far as Verona, and beyond, there have been nothing but blossoms,—masses of blossoms,—oleander, peach, and almond.

When the train reaches Mestre and the cool salt air fans his cheek, he can no longer keep his seat, so eager is he to catch the first glimpse of his beloved city,—now a string of pearls on the bosom of the lagoon.

Luigi has the painter's hand before his feet can touch the platform.

"Good news, Signore!" he laughs, patting my shoulder. "She is free!"

"Loretta!"

"Yes,—she and Vittorio are back in their garden. Borodini told the whole story to the good Queen Mother when she came at Easter, and the king pardoned her."

"Pardoned her! And Francesco dead!"

"Dead! No such good luck, Signore,—that brute of a crab-fisher got well!"

A COAT OF RED LEAD

A COAT OF RED LEAD

I

My offices are on the top floor of a high building overlooking the East River and the harbor beyond—not one of those skyscrapers punctured with windows all of the same size, looking from a distance like huge waffles set up on end—note the water-line of New York the next time you cross the ferry and see if you don't find the waffles—but an old-fashioned sort of a high building of twenty years ago—old as the Pyramids now, with a friendly janitor who comes to me when I send for him instead of my going to his "Office" when he sends for me; friendly elevator boys who poke their heads from out their iron cages and wait five seconds until I reach them, and an obliging landlord who lets me use his telephone.

Mawkum, my chief draftsman—when you have only one it is best to label him "Chief" to your clients; they think the others are off building bridges for foreign governments, or lunching at Delmonico's

with railroad presidents—my chief draftsman, I say, occupies the room opening into mine. His outlook is a brick wall decorated with windows, behind which can be seen various clerks poring over huge ledgers, a section of the roof topped with a chimney, and in the blue perspective the square, squat tower of the Produce Exchange in which hangs a clock. Both of these connecting rooms open on the same corridor, a convenient arrangement when clients wish to escape without being seen, or for the concealing of bidders who are getting plans and specifications for the same tenders, especially when two of them happen to turn up at the same moment.

Mawkum manages this, and with such adroitness that I have often seen clients, under the impression that the drafting-room was full, sit patiently in my office and take their turn while he quietly munches his sandwich behind closed panels—an illusion sustained by a loud "Good-morning" from my chief addressed to the circumambient air, followed by the slamming of the corridor door. When I remonstrate with Mawkum, insisting that such subterfuges are beneath the dignity of the office, he contends that they help business, and in proof quotes the old story of the unknown dentist who compelled a suffering prince to call the next day at noon, claiming that his list was full, when neither man, woman nor child had

been in his chair for over a week—fame and fortune being his ever after.

When Mawkum gets tired of inspecting the brick wall and the industrious clerks and the face of the clock, he strolls leisurely into my room, plants himself at my window—this occurs during one of those calms that so often come to an office between contracts—and spends hours in contemplating the view.

To me the stretch of sky and water, with its dividing band of roof, tower and wharf, stretching from the loop of steel—that spider-web of the mighty—to the straight line of the sea, is a never-ending delight. In the early morning its broken outline is softened by a veil of silver mist embroidered with puffs of steam; at midday the glare of light flashing from the river's surface makes silhouettes of the ferry-shuttles threading back and forth weaving the city's life; at twilight the background of purple is bathed in the glory of the sunset, while at night myriads of fireflies swarm and settle, tracing in pencillings of fire the plan of the distant town.

Mawkum, being commercially disposed, sees none of these things; his gaze is fixed on the panting tugs towing chains of canal boats; on the great floats loaded with cars and the stately steamers slowing down opposite their docks. Today he develops an especial interest.

"That's the *Tampico* in from Caracas and the Coast," he says, leaning across my desk, his fat hand resting on my letter file. "She's loaded pretty deep. Hides and tallow, I guess. 'Bout time we heard from that Moccador Lighthouse, isn't it? Lawton's last letter said we could look for his friend in a month—about due now. Wish he'd come." And he yawned wearily.

Mawkum's yawn indicated the state of his mind. He had spent the previous three weeks in elaborating the plans and specifications for a caisson to be used under a bridge pier—our client assuring him that he had, to use his own words, "a dead sure thing on the award." When the bids were opened, Mawkum congratulated him on his foresight and offered to attend the funeral in a body, the client's bid being some thirty per cent. too high. Little episodes like this add a touch of gayety to the hours spent in the top of the high building.

Mawkum's yawn over—it is generally in three sections, but can sometimes be curtailed—I interrupted hurriedly with:

"What sort of a structure is it?" I knew, but I wanted some other employment for his mouth.

"First order, screw pile, about a hundred and twenty feet high, stuck on a coral reef at the mouth of the harbor. 'Bout like our Fowey Rocks, off the

Florida coast. She's backing in." His eyes were still on the *Tampico,* the floes of North River ice hemming her in on all sides. "Passengers'll be off in an hour. Wonder how they like our climate—little chilly for pajamas."

Here Mawkum strolled into his room and began overhauling the contents of a rack of drawings piled one on top of the other like cordwood, labelled: "Screw Pile Structures."

The next morning there came a timid knock at Mawkum's door—the knock of a child with matches to sell, or of one of those dear sisters who collect for the poor. At a second summons, a little louder than the first, the chief, with an impatient air, slid from the high stool facing his drawing board, and threw wide the door.

I craned my head and discovered a small, ivory-tinted individual in a Panama hat, duck trousers and patent-leather shoes. Wrapped about his shrivelled frame, one red-lined end tossed gallantly over his shoulder, was an enormous Spanish *capa.* This hid every part of his body from his chin to the knees of his cotton ducks. From where I sat he looked like a conspirator in the play, or the assassin who lies in wait up the dark alley. Once inside he wrinkled his shoulders with the shivering movement of a horse dislocating a fly, dropped the red-lined end of the

capa, removed his Panama and began a series of genuflections which showed me at once that he had been born among a people who imbibed courtesy with their mother's, or their cocoanut's, milk.

"I am look' for the Grandioso Engineer," said the visitor. "I am Señor Garlicho——" Then a shade of uncertainty crossed his face: Mawkum was still staring at him. "It is a mistake then, perhaps? I have a letter from Señor Law-*ton.* Is it not to the great designer of lighthouse which I speak?" This came with more bows—one almost to the floor.

The mention of Lawton's name brought Mawkum to his senses. He placed his fat hand on his vest, crooked his back, and without the slightest allusion to the fact that the original and only Grandioso occupied the adjoining room, motioned the visitor to a seat and opened the letter.

I thought now it was about time I should assert my rights. Pushing back my chair, I walked rapidly through my own and Mawkum's room and held out my hand.

"Ah, Señor, I am delighted to meet you," I broke out in Spanish. (Here I had Mawkum—he did not understand a word.) "We have been expecting you; our mutual friend, Mr. Lawton, has given me notice of your coming—and how is the Señor and his family?" And in a few minutes we three were

He looked like a conspirator in the play, or the assassin who lies in wait up the dark alley.

seated at my desk with Mawkum unrolling plans, making sketches on a pad, figuring the cost of this and that and the other thing; I translating for Mawkum such statements as I thought he ought to know, thus restoring the discipline and dignity of the office —it never being wise to have more than one head to a concern.

This partial victory was made complete when his ivory-tinted Excellency loosened his waistcoat, dived into his inside pocket and, producing a package of letters tied with a string, the envelopes emblazoned with the arms and seal of the Republic of Moccador, asked if we might be alone. I immediately answered, both in Spanish and English, that I had no secrets from Señor Mawkum, but this did not prove satisfactory, and so Mawkum, with a wink to me, withdrew.

Mawkum gone, the little man—it is inconceivable how small and withered he was; how yellow, how spidery in many of his motions, especially with his fingers stained with cigarettes, how punctilious, how polite, how soft and insinuating his voice, and how treacherous his smile—a smile that smiled all alone by itself, while the cunning, glittering eyes recorded an entirely different brain suggestion—Mawkum gone, I say, the little man examined the door to see that it was tight shut, glanced furtively about the room, resumed his seat, slowly opened the largest

and most flaringly decorated envelope and produced a document signed with a name and titles that covered half the page. Then he began to talk at the rate of fifty words to the second; like the rattle of a ticker in a panic: of Alvarez, the saviour of his country—his friend!—his partner; of the future of Moccador under his wise and beneficent influence, the Lighthouse being one of the first improvements; of its being given to him to erect because of his loyalty to the cause, and to the part he had taken in overturning that despot, the Tyrant Paramba, who had ruled the republic with a rod of iron. Now it was all over—Paramba was living in the swamps, hunted like a dog. When he was caught—and they expected it every day—he would be brought to the capital, San Juan, in chains—yes, Señor, in chains—and put to work on the roads, so that everybody could spit upon him—traitor! Beast, that he was! And there would be other lighthouses—the whole coast was to be as light as day. Señor Law-*ton* had said he could speak with perfect confidence—he was doing so, trusting to the honor of the Grandioso—the most distinguished—etc., etc. And now—this in a summing-up voice with a slower movement, about twenty words to the second—would the Grandioso go in as a partner in these ventures? The income he could assure me would be so fixed that the light dues alone would pay

for the structure in two years—think of it, Señor, in two years—perhaps less!—and forever after we could both sit down and receive a small fortune, I by the *Tampico* in drafts signed by his Excellency, and he in his own hacienda surrounded by the patriots who honored him and the wife and children he adored.

At mention of the partnership a vague, cloudy expression crossed my face; my companion caught it, and continued:

Or (again the voice slowed down) I would be paid for the structure on its erection by me on the reef.

Again my eyes wandered, and again he took the cue:

Or—if that was not satisfactory—he would be willing to pay for the ironwork alone as soon as it arrived in the harbor of San Juan.

My Spanish is more like an old uniform that is rubbed up for a parade and then put away in camphor. Much of his talk was therefore lost on me; but the last sentences were as clear as if they had dropped from the lips of my old teacher, Señor Morales.

Half-rising from my chair, I placed my hand over my shirt-front and thanked his Excellency for his confidence—really one of the greatest compliments that had ever been paid me in all my professional career. To be at once the partner of two such dis-

tinguished *caballeros* as General Alvarez, the saviour of his country, and my distinguished guest, was an honor that few men could resist, but—*but*—here I picked up a lead pencil and a pad—BUT—the only way I could permit myself to rob him of his just desserts would be—here I traced a few lines on the pad—would be—my voice now became impressive—to receive one-third when it was erected in the yard in Brooklyn, and the balance on delivery of the bills of lading to his agent; payments to be made by his distinguished Excellency's bankers in New York.

If the modification of terms in any way disappointed the gentleman from San Juan, my closest observation of his smile and glance failed to detect it. He merely quivered his shoulders—a sort of plural shrug—rolled his cigarette tighter between his thumb and forefinger, remarked that the memoranda were entirely satisfactory, and folding the paper slid it carefully into his pocket; then with a series of salaams that reminded me of a Mohammedan spreading a prayer rug, and an "*A Dios,* Señor," the ivory-tinted individual withdrew.

A week later Mawkum, carrying a tin case addressed to his sun-dried Excellency, passed up the gangplank of the *Tampico;* this he placed in that gentleman's hands. Inside its soldered top were the plans and specifications of a First Order Light,

to be made of iron, to be properly packed, and to have three coats of red lead before shipment—together with a cross-section of foundation to be placed on the reef known as "La Garra de Lobo"—The Claw of the Wolf—outside the harbor of San Juan—all at the risk of his Supreme Excellency, Señor Tomas Correntes Garlicho, of the Republic of Moccador, South America—the price of the ironwork to hold good for three months.

On his return to the office Mawkum took up his position once more at my window, waited until the *Tampico,* the case and his Excellency were well on their way to Sandy Hook and started in on other work. The next day the incident, like so many similar ventures—his racks were full of just such estimates—was forgotten. If any of the bread thus cast upon the waters came back, the chief would be glad, and so would the Grandioso; if not, we were both willing to cut a fresh slice to keep it company.

II

Four months passed. The ice was out of the river; the steam heat had been turned off in the high building and the two time-worn awnings had been fixed to my windows by the obliging janitor. The *Tampico* had come and gone, and had come again. Its arrivals,

and departures were, as usual, always commented upon by Mawkum, generally in connection with "That Bunch of Dried Garlic," that being the irreverent way in which he spoke of his ivory-tinted Excellency. Otherwise the lighthouse, and all that pertained to it, had become ancient history.

One lovely spring morning—one of those warm mornings when every window and door is wide open to get the breeze from Sandy Hook and beyond—another visitor stepped into Mawkum's room. He brought no letters of introduction, nor did he confine himself to his mother tongue, although his nationality was as apparent as that of his predecessor. Neither did he possess a trace of Garlicho's affability or polish. On the contrary, he conducted himself like a muleteer, and spoke with the same sort of brutal authority.

And the differences did not stop here. Garlicho was shrivelled and sun-dried. This man was round and plump—plump as a stuffed olive fished from a jar of oil, and as shiny; dark-skinned, with a pair of heavy eyebrows that met over a stub of a nose ending in a knob; two keen rat eyes, a mouth hidden by a lump of a mustache black as tar, and a sagging, flabby chin which slunk into his collar. Next came a shirt-front soiled and crumpled, and then the rest of him in a suit of bombazine.

"You designed a lighthouse some months ago for Mr. Garlicho, of San Juan," he blurted out with hardly an accent. "I arrived this morning by the *Tampico*. My name is Carlos Onativia." And he laid a thin, elongated piece of cardboard on Mawkum's desk.

Only the arrival of a South American fresh from the Republic of Moccador, with a spade designed to dig up a long-buried treasure could have robbed Mawkum of his habitual caution of always guarding plans and estimates from outsiders—a custom which was really one of the fundamental laws of the office. The indiscretion was no doubt helped by the discovery that the owner of the spade spoke English, a fact which freed him at once of all dependence on the superior lingual attainments possessed by the Grandioso in the adjoining room.

Down came the duplicate blue-prints without a word of protest or any further inquiry, and before I could reach the inquirer's side and be properly introduced—I did not want to interfere too abruptly—Mawkum had not only unrolled the elevation and cross-sections, but had handed out a memorandum showing the estimate of cost.

Onativia acknowledged my presence with a slight bob of his head, loosened the upper button of his coat, fished up a pair of glasses, stuck them on the

knob end of his nose, and began devouring the plans in a way that showed both of us that it was not the first time he had looked over a set of blue-prints.

"This estimate is for the ironwork alone," the stranger said, "and is, as you see, good for three months. The time, as you will note, has expired. Do you now ask for an additional sum, or will the price stand?" All this in the tone of a Tombs lawyer cross-examining a witness.

Mawkum murmured that, as there had been no advance in the cost of the raw material, the price would stand.

"Very well. And now, what, in your judgment, should be added for the cost of erection?"

"Can't say," answered Mawkum; "don't know the coast or kind of labor, or the bottom of the reef—may be coral, may be hard-pan, may be sand. Do *you* know?"

"Yes—the coast is an ugly one, except four months in the year. Site is twelve miles from San Juan, exposed to the rake of the sea; bottom coral, I understand; labor cheap and good for nothing, and appliances none—except what can be shipped from here." This came with the air of one who knew.

I now took charge of the negotiations:

"We have refused to erect the structure or be

responsible for it after it leaves our dock. We told Señor Garlicho so."

Onativia lowered his chin, arched his eyebrows and looked at me over his glasses.

"I don't want you to erect it," he said in a purring tone with a patronizing strain through it. "I'll do that. What I want to know is what it would cost *here?* That's what I came to New York to find out."

"Has Señor Garlicho been awarded the contract?" I asked. It was useless to distribute any more bread upon the waters; certainly not on the ripples washing the shores of Moccador. If there were any business in sight I could very easily give either one of them an approximate cost; if there were none the bakery was closed.

"No, Señor Garlicho has *not* been awarded the contract. I am here to keep the affair alive. If I had thought it necessary I would have brought a certified check with me drawn to your order, which I would have handed you with my card. The standing of your firm prevented my doing so. This is business, and I want to get back home as quick as possible. Our coast is a dangerous one and the loss of life increases every year. Do you want this matter hung up for six weeks until we can communicate with Mr. Garlicho? Every hour's delay in putting the light on the Lobo means that many more deaths." As

he spoke a peculiar smile struggled from under his black dab of a mustache, got as far as the base of his nose and there collapsed.

My duty was now clear. Señor Garlicho, for some reason unknown to me, had waited until his option had expired and had then sent Onativia in his place. This wiped out the past and made a new deal necessary—one which included the price of erection on the reef, a point which had not been raised in the former negotiation.

"All right," I said, "you shall have the estimate. What you want is the cost of erecting a structure like the one here in the plans. Well, if it was to be put on our Florida coast, where I think the conditions are somewhat similar to those you describe, I would advise you to add about one hundred thousand dollars to the cost of the ironwork."

"Is that safe?" Again the smile worked itself loose.

"Yes," I replied, "if you don't lose your plant too often by bad weather. We have warnings of our coast storms and can provide against them. I don't know anything about yours—what are they like?"

"They come suddenly and without warning," he rejoined; "typhoons, generally, with the tiles rattling off the roofs and the natives hugging the cocoanut trees." With this he turned to the plans again.

"Better add another twenty thousand—I want to be safe," he said, in a tone that showed me he had at last made up his mind.

I added it, marking the sum on the memorandum which Mawkum had given him.

"Now, please put that in writing over your signature. I'll call to-morrow at ten for the document. Good-day."

When he was well down the corridor—we waited really until we heard the down-chug of the elevator—Mawkum looked at me and gave a low whistle.

"Add another twenty! What do you think is up? That Bunch of Garlic is working some funny business, or he wouldn't have sent that brigand up here."

I ruminated for a moment, walked to the window and took in the brick wall, the clerks and the clock tower. Frankly, I did not know what Garlicho was up to. It was the first time that any passenger by the *Tampico,* or any other steamer, from any quarter of the globe, had asked either Mawkum or myself to add one penny to the cost of anything. The effort heretofore had been to cut down each item to the last cent. Was the ivory-tinted gentleman going to build the lighthouse at his own expense out of loyalty to President Alvarez, the saviour of his country, and then donate it to the Government, using our estimate to prove the extent of his generosity? Or was there

a trick somewhere? I decided to sound Señor Onativia the next morning, and find out.

I had not long to wait. He arrived on the minute, bobbed to Mawkum, drew a chair to my desk and squared, or rather rounded, his body in front of me.

"I will now tell you what I omitted to say yesterday," he began. "When an order comes for this lighthouse—and it will arrive by the next steamer—it will not be signed by Señor Garlicho, but by me. I have reasons for this which I cannot explain, and which are not necessary for you to know. The ironwork—all you will have to furnish—will also be shipped in my name. With the order will be sent a letter introducing my bankers, who will call upon you at your convenience, and who will pay the amounts in the way you desire—one-third on the signing of the contract (one of the firm will act as my agent), one-third on erection and inspection of the ironwork properly put together in the yard, and the balance on delivery to them of the bills of lading. Is that quite satisfactory?"

I bowed my head in answer.

"And have you signed your estimate showing what you consider to be a fair price for both the lighthouse itself and for the cost of its erection on the Lobo Reef?"

"Yes; there it is," and I pointed to the document

lying on my desk. "And now one word, please. When did you last see Mr. Lawton? He's our agent, you know, and you must have met him in connection with this matter. When Señor Garlicho arrived he brought us a letter from him."

Onativia's lips curled slightly as he recognized the hidden meaning of the inquiry, but his expression never changed.

"I have never seen him. If I had I should not have wasted my time in getting a letter from him or from anybody else. As to Señor Garlicho, his time has expired; he has not asked for its renewal, and so far as this deal is concerned he does not count. I am here, as I told you, to keep the affair alive. I would have come sooner, but I have been away from the city of San Juan for months. Most of us who have opinions of our own have been away from San Juan—some for years. San Juan has not been a healthy place for men who believe in Paramba."

"And do you?"

"Absolutely. So do thousands of our citizens."

"You don't seem to agree with Señor Garlicho, then. He thought your former president, Paramba, a tyrant. As for President Alvarez, he looked upon him as the saviour of his country."

The lips had full play now, the smile of contempt wrinkling up to his eyelids.

"Saviour of his country! Saviour of his pocket! Pardon me; I am not here to discuss the politics of our people. Is this your estimate?" And he reached over and picked it from my desk. "Ah, yes: forty thousand dollars for the ironwork; one hundred and twenty thousand for the erection on the Lobo Reef; one hundred and sixty thousand in all. Thank you." Here he tucked the paper in his pocket and rose from his seat. "You will hear from me in a month, perhaps earlier. Good-day." And he waddled out.

The return of the *Tampico* six weeks later brought another South American consignment. This was a roll of plans concealed in a tin case—the identical package which Mawkum had handed the "Bunch of Dried Garlic" months before, together with a document stamped, restamped and stamped again, containing an order in due form, signed "Carlos Onativia," for a lighthouse to be erected on the "Garra de Lobo"—this last was in red ink—with shipping directions, etc., etc.

With it came the clerk of the bankers (he had the case under his arm), a reputable concern within a stone's throw of my office, who signed the contract and paid the first instalment.

Then followed the erection of the ironwork in the Brooklyn yard; its inspection by the engineer ap-

pointed by the bankers; its dismemberment and final coat of red lead—each tie-rod and beam red as sticks of sealing-wax—its delivery, properly bundled and packed, aboard a sailing vessel bound for San Juan, and the payment of the last instalment.

This closed the transaction, so far as we were concerned.

A year passed—two of them, in fact—during which time no news of any kind reached us of the lighthouse. Mawkum kept the duplicate blue-print of the elevation tacked on the wall over his desk to show our clients the wide range of our business, and I would now and then try to translate the newspapers which Lawton sent by every mail. These would generally refer to the dissatisfaction felt by many of the Moccadorians over the present government, one editorial, as near as I could make out, going so far as to hint that a secret movement was on foot to oust the "Usurper" Alvarez and restore the old government under Paramba. No reference was ever made to the lighthouse. We knew, of course, that it had arrived, for the freight had been paid: this we learned from the brokers who shipped it; but whether it was still in storage at San Juan or was flashing red and white —a credit to Onativia's energy and a godsend to incoming shipping—was still a mystery.

Mawkum would often laugh whenever Garlicho's or Onativia's name was mentioned, and once in a while we would discuss the difficulties they must have encountered in the erection of the structure in the open sea. One part of the transaction we could never understand, and that was why Garlicho had allowed the matter to lapse if the lighthouse was needed so badly, and what were his reasons for sending Onativia to renew the negotiations instead of coming himself.

All doubts on this and every other point were set at rest one fine morning by the arrival of a sunburned gentleman with gray side-whiskers, a man I had not seen for years.

"Why, Lawton!" I cried, grasping his hand. "This is a surprise. Came by the *Tampico,* did you? Oh, but I am glad to see you! Here, draw up a chair. But stop—not a word until I ask you some questions about that lighthouse."

The genial Scotchman broke out into a loud laugh.

"Don't laugh! Listen!" I said to him. "Tell me, why didn't Garlicho go on with the work, and what do you know about Onativia?"

Lawton leaned back in his chair and closed one eye in merriment.

"Garlicho did not go on with the work, my dear

friend, because he was breaking stone in the streets of San Juan with a ball and chain around his ankle. When Paramba came back to power he was tried for high treason and condemned to be shot. He saved his neck by turning over the lighthouse papers to Onativia. As to Carlos Onativia, he is a product of the soil. Started life as a coolie boss in a copper mine, became manager and owner, built the bridge over the Quitos River and the railroad up the Andes; is the brightest man in Moccador and the brains of the Paramba Government. One part of his duty is to keep the people satisfied, and he does it every single time; another is to divide with Paramba every dollar he makes."

"But the lighthouse!" I interrupted. "Is it up? You must have passed it on your way out of the harbor."

"Up? Yes, and lighted every night—up in the public garden in San Juan among the palms and bananas. The people eat ice-cream on the first platform and the band plays Sundays in the balcony under the boat davits. The people are wild about it—especially the women. It was the last coat of red lead that did it."

And again the office rang with Lawton's laugh.

MISS MURDOCK,—"SPECIAL"

MISS MURDOCK,—"SPECIAL"

A row of gas jets hooded by green paper shades lighting a long table at which sit half a dozen men in their shirt sleeves writing like mad; against the wall other men,—one drawing Easter lilies, another blocking in the background around a photograph, a third pasting clippings on sheets of brown paper. Every few minutes a bare-headed boy in a dirty apron, with smugged face and ink-stained fingers, bounds into the stifling, smoke-laden room, skirts the long table, dives through a door labelled "City Editor," remains an instant and bounds out again, his hands filled with long streamers of proof.

In the opening and shutting of the swinging door a round-bodied, round-headed man in his shirt sleeves comes into view. Covering his forehead, shielding his eyes from the glare of the overhead gas jet, is a half-moon of green leather held in place by strings tied behind his ears. The line of shadow caused by this shade makes a blank space about his eyes and brings into relief his pale, flabby cheeks, hard, straight mouth, and coarse chin. Only when he

lifts his head to give some order, or holds the receiver of the telephone to his ear, can his eyes be exactly located. Then they shine like a cat's in a cellar,—gray, white, gray again, with a glint of metallic green,—always the same distance apart, never wavering, never blinking. Overstrung, overworked, nervous men, working at high pressure, spurred by the merciless lash of passing minutes, have these eyes. So do cornered beasts fighting for air and space. Eleven-thirty had just been tolled by the neighboring clock; deliverance would come when the last form of the morning edition was made up. Until then safety could only be found in constant attack.

Outside the city editor's office, sprawled over a pile of mail sacks, between the long table and the swinging door, lay Joe Quinn, man-of-all-work,—boy, in fact, for he was but nineteen, big for his age, with arms and legs like cordwood and a back straight and hard as a plank. Joe's duty was to keep his eyes peeled, his ears open, and his legs in working order. If a reporter wanted a fresh pad, a cup of water, or a file of papers, Joe brought them; sometimes he foraged for sandwiches and beer,—down four pair of stairs, across the street into a cellar and up again; sometimes he carried messages; oftener he made an elevator of himself, running between the presses in the basement and the desk behind the swinging door.

A round-headed man in his shirtsleeves comes into view.

Fifty trips in a single night had not been an unusual tally.

To the inmates of the room the boy was known as "Joe" or "Quinn" or "Sonny." To the man with the half-moon shade over his eyes he was "Say" or "That Damned Kid." High-strung, high-pressure editors omit the unnecessary, condensation being part of their creed.

Up in the Franconia Notch, in a little hollow under White Face and below Bog Eddy, Joe had been known as "Jonathan's boy," Jonathan being the name his father went by, the last half never being used,—there being but one "Jonathan"—the one whom everybody loved.

The cabin was still standing, where Joe was born, —a slant of logs with a stone chimney and some outbuildings; and his old father was still alive, and so was his mother and his little "Sis." Summer mornings the smoke would curl straight up from the rude stone chimney, catch a current of air from the valley, and stretch its blue arms toward the tall hemlocks covering the slope of the mountain. Winter mornings it lay flat, buffeted by the winds, hiding itself later on among the trees. Joe knew these hemlocks, —loved them,—had hugged them many a time, laying his plump, ruddy cheek against the patches of cool moss velveting their sides. "Nothin' like trees," his

old father had told him,—"real human when ye know 'em."

To-night, as he lay stretched out on the mail sacks, his ears unlatched, listening for the sound of the night city editor's bell, or his gruff "Say, you!" his mind kept reverting to their bigness and wide, all-embracing, protecting arms. A letter from Jonathan received that morning, and still tucked away in his inside pocket, had revived these memories.

"They've started to cut roads, son," it read. "I was out gummin' yesterday and got up under White Face. Won't be nothing left if they keep on. Cy Hawkins sold his timber land to them last winter and they've histed up a biler on wheels and a succular saw, and hev cleared off purty nigh every tree clean from the big windslash down to the East Branch. It ain't going into building stuff; they're sending it down to Plymouth to a pulp mill and grinding it up to print newspapers on, so the head man told me. Guess you know all about it, but it was news to me. I told him it was a gol-darn-shame to serve a tree so, being as how trees had feelings same as men, but he laughed and said it warn't none of my bizness, and I guess it ain't. Beats all what some folks will do for money."

Joe thought so too,—had been thinking so ever since he broke the seal of the letter that the post-

master at Woodstock had directed for his father. "Dad's right; trees have feelings," he kept repeating to himself. And, as to being human, he could recall a dozen that he had talked to and that had talked back to him ever since he could remember. His father had taught him their language on the long days when he had trailed behind carrying the gum bag or had hidden in the bushes while the old man wormed himself along, his rifle in the hollow of his arm, or when the two lay stretched out before their camp fire.

"Dogs and trees, my son, will never go back on ye like some folks I've hearn tell of. Allers find 'em the same. See that yaller birch over thar?—Well, I've knowed that birch over forty-two year and he ain't altered a mite, 'cept his clothes ain't as decent as they was, and his shoes is give out 'round the roots. You kin see whar the bark's busted 'long 'round his toes,—but his heart's all right and he's alive and peart, too. You'll find him fust tree out in the spring, —sometimes 'fore the sugar sap's done runnin'. Purty soon, if you watch him same's me, ye'll see him begin to shake all over,—kind o' shivery with some inside fun; then comes the buds and, fust thing ye know, he gives a little see-saw or two in the warm air and out busts the leaves, and he a laughin' fit to kill. Maybe the birds ain't glad, and maybe them

squirrels that's been snowed up all winter with their noses out o' that crotch, ain't jes' holdin' their sides, and maybe, too, them little sunbeams don't like to sneak in and go to sleep on the bark all silvery and shinin' like the ribbons on Sis's hat! They're human, them trees is, I tell ye, son,—real human!

"And ye want to treat 'em with some perliteness, too; they're older'n anything 'round here 'cept the rocks; and they've been holdin' up the dignity of this valley, too,—kind o' 'sponsible for things. That's another thing ye mustn't forgit. The fust folks that come travellin' through this notch—'bout time the Injins quit,—took notice on 'em, I tell ye. That's what they come for. Bald Top and White Face was all right, but it was the trees that knocked 'em silly. That's what you kin read in the book school-teacher has, and that's true. And see how they treat their brothers that git toppled over,—by a windslash, maybe, or lightnin' or a landslide, or some such cussed thing, givin' 'em a shoulder to lean on same as you would help a cripple. When they're clean down and done for it ain't more'n a year or two 'fore they got 'em kivered all over with leaves, and then they git tergether and hev a quiltin' party and purty soon they're all over blankets o' green moss, and the others jes' stand 'round solemn and straight like's if they was mountin' guard over their graves.

"It's wicked to kill most anything 'less ye got some use—and a good one, too,—for the meat, but it's a durned sight meaner to cut down a tree that took so long to grow and that's been so decent all its life, 'less ye can't do without the stuff ye git out'n it."

Joe had listened and had drunk it all in, and his love for the tall giants away back in the deep wilderness had never left him. It was these dear old friends more than anything else that had kept him at home, under plea of helping his father, months after he knew he ought to be up and doing if he would ever be of any use to the old man in his later years.

It was Plymouth first, as stable boy, and then down to Nashua and Boston as teamster and freight handler, and then, by what he considered at the time a lucky chance—(Katie Murdock, from his own town, and now a reporter in the same newspaper office with himself, had helped), man of all work in this whirl where he felt like a fly clinging to a driving wheel.

Stretching out his stout saw-log legs and settling his big shoulders into the soft cushions made by the sacks, his mind went back to the old sawmill,—Baker's Mill,—and the dam backed up alongside the East Branch. An old kingfisher used to sit on a limb over the still water and watch for minnows,—a

blue and white fellow with a sharp beak. He had frightened him away many a time. And there was a hole where two big trout lived. He remembered the willows, too, and the bunch of logs piled as high as the mill. These would be rolled down and cant-hooked under its saw when the spring opened, but Baker never ground any one of them up into wood pulp. It went into clapboards to keep out the cold, and shingles to keep off the rain, and the "waste" went under the kettles of the neighbors, the light of the jolly flames dancing round the room. He had carried many a bundle home himself that the old man had sent to Jonathan. Most everybody sent Jonathan something, especially if they thought he needed it.

Then his mind reverted to his own share in the whirl about him. It wasn't a job he liked, but there wasn't anything else offering, and then Katie might want somebody to look after her, and so it was just as well he had the job. He and Katie had been schoolmates together not so long ago, in the wooden schoolhouse near the crossroads. She had gone to college, and had come home with a diploma. She was two or three years older than he was, but that didn't make any difference to a boy and girl from the same village when they had grown up alongside of each other. He wondered how long it was to July,

when he was promised a week,—and so was Katie. He knew just what they'd do; he could get two passes to Plymouth,—his old friend the freight boss had promised him that,—then about daylight, the time the train arrived, he'd find Marvin, who drove the stage up the valley and past his old home, and help him curry his team and hitch up, and Marvin would give them a ride free. He could feel the fresh air on his cheeks as he rattled out of the village, across the railroad track and out into the open. Tim Shekles, the blacksmith, would be at work, and old Mother Crawport would be digging in her garden, early as it was; and out in the fields the crows would be hunting corn; and pretty soon down would go the wheels into the soft, clean gravel of the brook that crossed the turnpike and out again on the other side dripping puddles in the dirt; and soon the big trees would begin, and keep on and on and on,—away up to the tops of the mountains, the morning sun silvering the mists sweeping up their sides,—and——

"Say! you! Wake up! He's been hollering at you for five minutes. *Git!*"

Joe sat up and rubbed his eyes. The fresh air of the morning had vanished.

"Yes, sir." He was on his feet now, alert as a terrier that had sniffed a rat.

"*Yes, sir,* eh! How many times do you want me to call you? Go and find Miss Murdock, and send her here on the run. Tell her to get her hat and cloak and show up in two minutes. I've got an assignment for her on the East Side,—just come over the 'phone. Hurry now! That damned kid ought to be——"

But Joe was already out of the room and down two pair of stairs. Before the minutes were up he was back again, Katie Murdock with him. She was sliding her arm into the sleeve of her jacket as she entered.

"Forty-third and First Avenue, Miss Murdock," said the night city editor, lifting his head so that the cat eyes had full play. "Girl overboard from one of the ferry boats,—lives at 117.—Drowned, they say,—some fellow mixed up in it. Take your snapshot along and get everything. Find the mother if she's got one and——"

But the girl had gone. She knew the value of time,—especially at that hour, even if she had been but a week in her new department of "Special." Her chief knew it, too, or he wouldn't have sent her at that hour. There was time—plenty of time if everything went right,—thirty minutes, perhaps an hour,—to spare, but they were not hers to waste.

"Wait for me, Joe," she said, as she hurried past him. "We'll go up town together, soon as the presses start."

Joe threw himself again on the pile of sacks and kept his ears open for orders. It was a bad night for Katie to go out. She was plucky and could hold her own,—had done so a dozen times,—once in a street car when some fellow tried to be familiar,—but he didn't like her to go, all the same. Nobody who looked into her face and then down into her blue eyes would ever make any mistake, but then some men mightn't take the trouble to look. He'd wait for her, no matter how late it might be. When she came in she would be out of breath, and perhaps hungry,—then he'd take her over to Cobb's for a cup of coffee.

During the interim Joe's legs had been kept busy. Not only had he rushed downstairs and up again half a dozen times, springing to the night city editor's curse, or pound, or shout, whichever had come handiest, but he had also been twice to the corner for frankfurters for reporters who hadn't had a crumb to eat for hours. He was unwrapping the second one when Katie burst in.

Her hat and coat were dripping wet and her hair hung in disorder about her pale face. Her notes were nearly completed; she had worked them out on

the elevated on her way downtown. Joe absorbed her with a look, and slid to her side. Something in her face told him of her errand; something of the suffering, and perhaps horror,—and he wanted to get close to her. The girl had reached the editor's desk now, and was waiting until he had finished the paragraph his pen was inditing.

"Well," he said, laying down his pen,—"What have you got?" He was running his cat eyes over the girl's notes as he spoke,—taking in at a glance the "meat" of her report. Then he added,—"Get any snaps?"

"No, sir, I——"

"Didn't I tell you I must have 'em?"

"Yes, but I couldn't do it. The mother was half crazy and the two little children would have broken your heart. She was the only one who could earn anything——"

"And you got into the house and had the whole bunch right in your fist and never snapped a shutter! See here, Miss Murdock, I ain't running a Bible class and you're not working in the slums,—you can keep that gush for some other place. You had your camera and flash,—I saw you go out with them. I wanted everything: corpse of girl, the mother, children; where she was hauled out,—who hauled her out,—her lover,—she went overboard for some fel-

low, you remember,—I told you all that. Well, you're the limit!"

Joe had moved up closer, now. He was formulating in his mind what would happen to Katie if he caught the night city editor under his chin and slammed his head against the wall. He knew what would happen to the editor and to himself, but it was Katie's fate that kept his hands flat to his sides.

"I would rather throw up my position than have done it, sir," Katie pleaded. "There are some things never ought to be printed. This drowned girl——"

The night city editor sprang from his chair, brushed the pile of notes aside with his hand, and shouted:——

"Say, you! Find that damned boy, somebody, if he isn't asleep!"

Joe, who was not ten feet away, stepped up and faced him,—stepped so quickly that the man backed away as if for more room.

"Get a move on and send Miss Parker here. Hunt for her,—if she isn't downstairs she may be at Cobb's getting something to eat. Quick, now!" Then he turned to Katie:—

"You better go home, Miss Murdock. You're tired, maybe: anyhow, you're way off. Miss Parker'll get what we want,—she isn't so thin-skinned. Here, take that stuff with you,—it's no use to me."

The girl reached across the desk, gathered up the scattered notes, and without a word left the room. On the way downstairs she met Miss Parker coming up, Joe at her heels. She was older than Katie,—and harder; a woman of thirty-five, whose experience had ranged from nurse in a reformatory to a night reporter on a "Yellow." The two women passed each other without even a nod. Joe turned and followed Katie Murdock downstairs and into the night air. Miss Parker kept on her way. As she glided through the room to the city editor's office, she had the air of a sleuth tracking a criminal.

Once outside in the night air, Joe drew Katie from under the glare of the street lamp. Her eyes were running tears,—at the man's cruelty and injustice,—she who had worked to any hour of the night to please him.

Joe was boiling.

"I'll go back and punch him, if you'll let me. I heard it all."

"No, it'll do no good,—both of us would get into trouble, then."

"Well, then, I'll chuck my job. This ain't no place for any decent girl nor man. Was it pretty bad where you went, Katie?"

"Bad! Oh, Joe, you don't know. I said, last week, when I forced my way into the room of that

poor mother whose son was arrested, that I'd never report another case like it. But you ought to have seen what I saw to-night. The poor girl worked in a box factory, they told me, and this man hounded her, and in despair she threw herself overboard. The room was full when I got there,—policemen,—one or two other reporters,—no woman but me. They had brought her in dripping wet and I found her on the floor,—just a child, Joe,—hardly sixteen,—her hair filled with dirt from the water,—the old mother wringing her hands. Oh, it was pitiful! I could have flashed a picture,—nobody would have cared nor stopped me,—but I couldn't. Don't you see I couldn't, Joe? He has no right to ask me to do these things,—nobody has,—it's awful. It's horrible! What would that poor mother have said when she saw it in the paper? I'll go home now. No, you needn't come,—they'll want you. Go back upstairs. Good-night."

Joe watched her until she caught an uptown car, and then turned into the side door opening on the narrow street. A truck had arrived while they were talking, and the men were unloading some great rolls of paper,—enormous spools. "What would dad say if he saw what his trees had come to?" Joe thought, as he stood for a moment looking them over,—his mind going back to his father's letter.

One roll of wood pulp had already been jacked up and was now feeding the mighty press. The world would be devouring it in the morning; the drowned girl would have her place in its columns,—so would every other item that told of the roar and crash, the crime, infamy, and cruelty of the preceding hours. Then the issues would be thrown away to make room for a fresher record;—some to stop a hole in a broken window; some to be trampled under foot of horse and man; many to light the fires the city over.

"My poor trees!" sighed Joe, as he slowly mounted the steps to the top floor. "There ain't no common sense in it, I know. Got to make sumpin' out o' the timber once they're cut down, but it gits me hot all the same when I think what they've come to. Gol-darn-shame to serve ye so! Trees has feelin's, same's men,—that's what dad says, and that's true!"

Miss Parker had done her work. Joe saw that when he opened the paper the next morning: saw it at a glance, and with a big lump in his throat and a tightening of his huge fists. Flaring headlines marked the first page; under them was a picture of the girl in a sailor hat,—she had found the original on the mantel and had slipped it in her pocket. Then

followed a flash photo of the dead girl lying on the floor,—her poor, thin, battered and bruised body straight out, the knees and feet stretching the wet drapery,—nothing had been left out. Most of the details were untrue,—the story of the lover being a pure invention, but the effect was all right. Then, again, no other morning journal had more than a few lines.

Everybody congratulated her. "Square beat," one man said, at which her gray, cold face lightened up.

"Glad you liked it," she answered with a nod of her head,—"I generally 'get there.'"

When the night city editor arrived—the city editor was ill and he had taken his place for the day—he reached out and caught her hand. Then he drew her inside the office. When she passed Joe again on her way out, her smile had broadened.

"Got her pay shoved up," one of the younger men whispered to another.

When Katie came in an hour later, no one in the room but Joe caught the dark lines under her eyes and the reddened lids,—as if she had passed a sleepless night,—one full of terror. She walked straight to where the boy stood at work.

"I've just seen that poor mother, Joe. I saw the paper and what Miss Parker had said and I went straight to her. I did not want her to think I had

been so cruel. When I got to her house this morning there was a patrol wagon at the door and all the neighbors outside. A woman told me she was all right until somebody showed her the morning paper with the picture of her drowned daughter; then she began to scream and went stark mad, and they were getting ready to take her to Ward's Island when I walked in. You've seen the picture, haven't you?"

Joe nodded. He had seen the picture,—had it in his hand. He dare not trust himself to speak,—everybody was around and he didn't want to appear green and countrified. Then again, he didn't want to make it harder for Katie. She had had nothing to do with it, thank God!

The door of the office swung open. The editor this time caught sight of Katie, called her by name, and, with a "Like to see you about a little matter," beckoned her inside and shut the door upon them both.

A moment later she was out again, a blue envelope in her hand.

"He's got me discharged, Joe. Here's a note from the city editor," she said. Her voice quivered and the tears stood in her eyes.

"Fired you!"

"Yes,—he says I'm too thin-skinned."

Joe stood for a moment with the front page of the

paper still in his hand. Something of Jonathan came into his face,—the same firm lines about his mouth that his father had when he crawled under the floor timbers of the mill to save Baker's girl, pinned down and drowning, the night of the freshet.

Crushing the sheet in his hand Joe walked straight into the city editor's office, a swing in his movement and a look in his eye that roused everybody in the room.

"You've got Katie Murdock fired, she says," he hissed between his teeth. "What fur?" He was standing over the night city editor now, his eyes blazing, his fists tightly closed.

"What business have you to ask?" growled the editor.

"Every business!" There was something in the boy's face that made the man move his hand toward a paper weight.

"She's fired because she wouldn't do your dirty work. Look at this!"—he had straightened out the crumpled sheet now: "Look at it! That's your work!—ain't a dog would a-done it, let alone a man. Do you know what's happened? That girl's mother went crazy when she saw that picture! You sent that catamount, Miss Parker, to do it, and she done it fine, and filled it full o' lies and dirt! Ye didn't care who ye hurt, you——"

The man sprang to his feet.

"Here!—put yourself outside that door! Get out or I'll——"

"Git out, will I!—ME!—I'll git out when you eat yer words,—and you *will* eat 'em. Down they go——"

Joe had him by the throat now, his fingers tight under his chin, his head flattened against the wooden partition. In his powerful grasp the man was as helpless as a child.

"Eat it,—swallow it!—*more*—*more*—all of it! damn ye!"

He was cramming the wad between the editor's lips, one hand forcing open his teeth, the other holding his head firm against the wall.

Then flinging the half strangled man from him he turned, and facing the crowd of reporters and employes—Miss Parker among them,—shouted:—

"And ye're no better,—none o' ye. Ye all hunt dirt,—live on dirt and eat dirt. Ye're like a lot o' buzzards stuck up on a fence rail waitin' fur an old horse to die. Ain't one o' you reporters wouldn't been glad to do what that catamount over there done last night, and ain't one o' ye wouldn't take pay fur it. Katie Murdock's fired? Yes,—two of us is fired, —me and her. We'll go back whar we come from. We mayn't be so almighty smart as some o' you city

folks be, but we're a blamed sight decenter. Up in my country dead girls is sumpin' to be sorry fur, not sumpin' to make money out'er, and settin' a poor mother crazy is worse'n murder. Git out o' my way thar, or I'll hurt some o' ye! Come, Katie!"

THE BEGUILING OF PETER GRIGGS

THE BEGUILING OF PETER GRIGGS

Peter was in his room when I knocked—up two flights of stairs off Washington Square—Eighth Street really—in one of those houses with a past—of mahogany, open wood fires, old Madeira in silver coasters pushed across hand-polished tables,—that kind of a past.

None of all this could be seen in its present. The marble steps outside were worn down like the teeth of an old horse, and as yellow; the iron railings were bent and cankered by rust; the front door was in blisters; the halls bare, steps uncarpeted, and the spindling mahogany balusters showed here and there substitutes of pine.

Nor did the occupants revive any of its old-time charm. The basement held a grocery—a kindling-wood, ice and potato sort of grocery; the parlor boasted a merchant tailor—much pressing and repairing, with now and then a whole suit; the second floor front was given over to a wig-maker and the second story back to a manicure. Here the tide of the commercial and the commonplace stopped—stopped just short of the third floor where old Peter Griggs lived.

You would understand why if you knew the man.

Just as this particular old house possessed two distinct personalities—one of the past and the other of the present—so did the occupant of the third floor.

Downtown in the custom house, where he was employed (he had something to do with invoices), he was just plain Mr. Griggs—a short, crisp, "Yes and No" little man—exact, precise and absurdly correct: never, in all his life, had he made a mistake.

Up in these rooms on the third floor he was dear old Peter—or Pete—or Griggsy—or whatever his many friends loved best to call him. Up here, too, he was the merriest companion possible; giving out as much as he absorbed, and always with his heart turned inside out. That he had been for more than thirty years fastened to a high stool facing his desk bespoke neither political influence nor the backing of rich friends. Nobody, really, had ever wanted his place. If they did they never dared ask for it—not above their breath. They would as soon have thought of ousting the old clock from its perch in the rotunda, or moving one of the great columns that faced the street. So he just stayed on ticking away at his post, quite like the old clock itself, and getting stiffer and stiffer in the line of his duty—quite like the columns—and getting more and more covered with the dust of long habit—quite like both of them.

This dust, being outside dust, and never sinking the thousandth part of an inch below the surface, left its mark on the man beneath as a live coal fading and whitening leaves its covering of ashes on the spark.

These two—the ashes and the spark—made up the sum of Peter's individuality. The ash part was what he offered to the world of routine—the world he hated. The spark part—cheery, warm, enthusiastic, full of dreams, of imaginings, with an absorbing love for little bits of beauty, such as old Satsuma, Cloisonné, quaint miniatures and the like—all good, and yet within reach of his purse—this part he gave to his friends.

I am inside his room now, standing behind him taking in the glow of the fire and the red damask curtains shielding the door that leads to his bedroom; my eye roving over the bookcases crammed with books, the tables littered with curios and the mantel covered with miniatures and ivories. I invariably do this to discover his newest "find" before he calls my attention to it. As he has not yet moved or given me any other sign of recognition than a gruff "Draw up a chair," in a voice that does not sound a bit like him—his eyes all the time on the smouldering fire, there is yet a chance to look him over before he begins to talk. (We shall all be busy enough listening when he does begin.)

I say "*all*," for there is a second visitor close behind me, and the sound of still another footstep can already be heard in the hall below.

It is the back of Peter's head now that interests me, and the droop of his shoulders. They always remind me of Leech's sketch of Old Scrooge waiting for Marly's ghost, whenever I come upon him thus unobserved. To-night he not only wears his calico dressing-gown—an unheard-of garment in these days—but a red velvet cap pulled over his scalp. Most bald men would have the cap black—but then most bald men have not Peter's eye for color.

It's a queer head—this head of Peter Griggs. Not at all like any other head I know. If I should attempt to describe it, I should merely have to say bluntly that it was more like an enlarged hickory-nut than any other object I can think of. It is of the same texture, too, and almost as devoid of hair. Except on his temples, and close down where his collar binds his thin neck, there is really very little hair left; and this is so near the color of the shrivelled skin beneath that I never know where one begins and the other ends.

When I face him—and by this time I am facing him—I must admit that the hickory-nut simile still holds. There are no particular features, no decided bumps, no decided hollows; the nose is only an en-

larged ridge, the cheeks and eye-sockets only seams. But the eyes count—yes, the eyes count—count so that you see at once that they are the live points of the live coal smouldering beneath.

Here the hickory-nut as a simile goes all to pieces. These eyes are the flash from some distant lighthouse, burning dull when the commonplace of life passes before him, and bursting into effulgence when something touches his heart or stirs his imagination. Downtown in the Dismal Tomb even the lighthouse goes to smash. Here the eyes set so far back in his head that they look for all the world like two wary foxes peeping out of a hole, losing nothing of what is going on outside—never being fooled, never being wheedled or coaxed out of their retreat. "Can't fool Mr. Griggs," some broker says, as he tries to get his papers signed out of his turn. Uptown these same foxes are running around loose in an abandonment of jollity, frisking here and there, all restraint cast aside—trusting everybody—and glad to. That's why I couldn't understand his tone of voice when I opened his door.

"Not sick, old fellow?" I cried. He had not yet lifted his head or vouchsafed a single word of welcome.

"Yes, sick at heart. My old carcass is all right, but inside—way down where a man lives—I'm sick

unto death. Take a look at the mantelpiece. You see my best miniature's gone, don't you?"

"Not the Cosway?"

"Yes, the Cosway!"

"Stolen?"

"Worse than stolen! Oh, my boy, such mean people live in the world! I couldn't believe it possible. I've read in the papers something like it, but that I should have been—oh, I can't get over it! It haunts me like a ghost. It isn't the value—it's the way it was done; and I was so helpless, and I meant only to be kind."

The other men had arrived now and the three of us were ranged around Peter in a circle, wondering with wide-opened eyes at his tone of voice, his dismal expression, and especially at the air of dejection which seemed to ooze through every square inch of his calico dressing-gown.

"Sit down, all of you," he continued, "and listen. And it's all your fault. If only one of you had come up to see me! I waited and waited; I knew most of you would be off somewhere eating your Thanksgiving turkey, but that every mother's son of you should have forgotten me—that's what I won't forgive you for."

We, with one accord, began to make excuses, but he waved us into silence.

"After a while I got so lonely I couldn't stand it any longer. So about six o'clock I started out to dine alone somewhere—some place where I had no associations with any one of you. I hadn't gone as far as Broadway when along came two men and a woman. You'd have said 'two gentlemen and a lady'—I say two men and a woman. I looked at them and they looked at me. I saw they were from out of town, and right away came the thought, they must be lonely, too. Everybody is lonesome on Thanksgiving if he's away from home, or, like me, has no place to go to. The Large Man stopped and nudged the Small Man, and the Woman turned and looked at me earnestly, then all three talked together for a minute, then I heard the Small Man say, 'I'll go you a ten on it,' which conveyed no meaning to me. Then all three of them walked back to where I stood and the Large Man asked me where Foscari's restaurant was.

"Well, of course, that was in the next street, so I volunteered to show them the place. On the way over the Small Man and the Woman lagged behind and I overheard them say that it would never do—that is, the Woman said so; at which the Small Man laughed and said they couldn't find a better. All this time the Large Man held me by the arm in a friendly sort of way, as if he were afraid I would stub my toe and fall if he didn't help me over the gutters; telling me all

the time that he didn't know the ropes around New York and how much obliged he was to me for taking all this trouble to show him. Pretty soon we arrived at Foscari's. I never dined there—never had been inside the place. Cheap sort of a restaurant—down two steps from the sidewalk, but they asked for Foscari's, and that's where I took them.

"'Here's the place,' I said, and I lifted my hat to the Woman and turned to go back.

"'No, don't go,' said the Large Man, still holding on to my arm. 'You've been white and decent to us; we're all stranded here. This is Thanksgiving—come in and have dinner with us.'

"Then I began by thanking them and ended by saying I couldn't. Then the Small Man began to urge me, saying that out in his country, near the Rockies, everybody was willing to sit down at anybody's table when he was invited; and the Large Man kept on squeezing my arm in a friendly sort of way, so I finally said I didn't care if I did, and in we all went. When we got inside the place was practically empty—only one guest, really—and he was over by the wall in a corner. There were only two waiters—one an Irishman who said his name was Mike, with a very red head and an enormous mouth—a queer kind of a servant for that kind of a restaurant, I

thought—and the other a young Italian, who was probably the cook.

"'You order,' said the Large Man. 'You know what's good in New York.'

"So I ordered.

"And I want to tell you that the dinner was a particularly good one—well cooked and well served. We had soup and fish and an Italian ragout, macaroni, peppers and two bottles of red wine. Before the soup was over I was glad I'd come; glad, not only because the dinner was all right, but because the people were human kind of people—no foolishness about them—no pretension. They were not our kind of people, of course—couldn't find them in New York if you looked everywhere—not born and brought up here. The Woman was gentle and kindly, saying very little, but the Large Man was a hearty, breezy sort of fellow—even if his language at times was rough and uncouth—at least I thought so. Big bones and a well-fed body; quick in his movements, yet slow in his talk, showing force and determination in everything he said. The Small Man was as tough physically and as alert mentally, but there wasn't so much of him. He talked, however, twice as fast as the Large Man, and said less.

"He talked of the city—how smart the people

were, how stuck up some of them, thinking they knew it all, and how, if they but thought about it, they must see after all that the West was the only thing that kept the country alive. That kind of talk—not in an offensive way—just as all of us talk when we believe in our section of the country.

"All this time the solitary guest sat against the wall listening. Near as I could make out he only had one dish and a small bottle of wine. Presently he made a remark—not to us—not to the room—more as if to himself.

"'West is the only thing, is it? And every man Jack of them from New England stock!'

"This, too, didn't come in any offensive spirit—just as an aside, as if to keep himself company, being lonely, of course.

"But the Large Man caught it before all the words were out of his mouth.

"'Dead right, pard,' he said—I only quote his words, gentlemen. 'My father came from Boston—left there in '58. Where're you from?'

"'Boston,' answered the man looking at him over the prongs of his fork.

"'That so? Well, why ain't you eatin' your turkey with your folks? Got any?'

"'Yes, got a lot of them, but I was short of a ticket.'

"Here the Large Man got up and went over to the Man from Boston.

"'Shake for Boston,' he said, holding out his big hand. 'And now bring that bottle over here and chip in with us.' Then he opened his pocketbook and took out a square slip of paper.

"'Here, tuck that in your clothes.' Again I must remark, gentlemen, that I am only quoting their language so that you can get a better idea of what sort of people I was with. 'That's a pass to your 'burg. I'm going South and I won't use it.'

"There were five of us at the table now, the Bostonian bringing over his plate without a word except 'Thank you,' and taking his share of the different dishes.

"The talk now became very interesting. The Large Man told stories of his early life on a farm and the Bostonian recited verses, and recited them very well, and the Woman laughed in the right place, and when the cigars were brought and the coffee and the cognac, I was sorry it was all over. That, when I look back upon it, is the most extraordinary thing of all. How a man of my experience could have—Well, I won't stop, I'll just keep on.

"With the coffee, and before the red-headed Irishman had brought the bill—oh, you should go round to Foscari's and look at that Irishman just to see how

coarse and vulgar a man can be who spends his whole life feeding animals who—no, I *will* go on, for the most interesting part is to come. When the coffee was served, I say, the Large Man asked the waiter where he could send a telephone message to his hotel —wanted the porter to get his trunks down. The Irishman answered: 'Out in the hall, to the right o' where ye come in.' 'I'll go with you,' said the Woman; so the two got up and I opened the door for her, and we three sat down again—that is, the Small Man, the Bostonian and myself.

"We talked on, not noticing the time; then the Small Man looked at his watch, jumped up and called out to the waiter: 'Where did you say that telephone place was?'

"'In the hall—on the other side of that dure; ye kin see it from where ye're sittin'.'

"'Well, he's taking a devil of a time to do his telephoning,' said the Small Man. 'Hold on to my coffee till I go and punch him up.'

"The Bostonian and I kept on talking. He was a draughtsman in an architect's office, so he told me, and was promised a place the following week, and I was very much interested in what he told me of his walking the streets looking for work.

"Mike, the waiter, now laid the bill on the table. I didn't want to know the amount; my hosts wouldn't

want me to see it, of course, and so I didn't look at it. The Bostonian craned his head, but I forestalled his glance and turned a plate over it before he could read the total.

"Mike now approached.

"'Ye'd better pay now,' he said, 'before any more o' ye skip. It's nine dollars and sixty cints.'

"'They'll all be back in a minute,' I said. 'Wait till they come. I'm only an invited guest.'

"'I'll wait nothin'. The boss is out and I'm in charge. H'ist out yer money.'

"The Bostonian had risen from the table now and was looking at me as if I'd just been detected in picking his pocket.

"'But I'm an invited guest,' I protested.

"'Invited guest, are ye?' continued the Irishman. 'And ye ordered the grub yersilf! You heard him!' This to the Bostonian. 'Didn't he order the stuff? Let's see yer wad. No more o' ye's goin' to l'ave this room 'till I gits nine dollars and sixty cints. Here, Macaroni'—and he called the Italian—'ring up the station-house and till thim to sind somebody 'round. Ye can't play that game on me!"

"'My dear fellow,' I said—I had now to be as courteous as I could—'I don't want to play anything on you. You may be right in your views that these

people have served me a scurvy trick, but I don't believe it.'

"'Well, thin, pull yer wad out, or I'll call the perlice.'

"'Don't do anything of the kind,' I urged. 'My name is Peter Griggs and I live quite near here. Lived there for twenty years. You can find out all about me from any of the neighbors; I haven't enough money with me, but I'll go to my room and get it.'

"'No ye don't; none o' that guff for me!' You can't think how coarse he was. Then he walked deliberately over to the door and stood with his back against it.

"The Bostonian now joined in.

"'It looks as if you had been buncoed, my friend,' he said. 'It's an old dodge, this, of getting somebody to pay for your dinner, especially on holidays, and yet I can't see how anybody would pick you out as a greenhorn. I'd divide the bill with you, but really, as you know, I haven't the money.' I saw from his tone that he was thinking better of me.

"'No, I'll pay it myself. You, certainly, were not to blame. Will you go to my room with me, Mike?' I called him Mike because it seemed the best way to conciliate the man.

"'How far is it?' he asked, softening a little.

"'Two blocks.'

"'And ye'll pay if I go?'

"'Of course I will pay. Do I look like a man who would cheat you?'

"'All right, come on.'

"I bade the Bostonian good-by, and we started.

"Mike didn't speak a word on the way, nor did I. I felt like a suspected thief that a policeman was taking to the station-house; I've passed them many times in the street, and I've often wondered what was passing in the thief's mind. I knew now. I knew, too, what the Bostonian thought of me, and the Italian, and Mike.

"Then a shiver went through me, and the next moment I broke out into a cold sweat. I suddenly remembered that I hadn't any money in my room. I had given every cent, except two dollars of the amount I had brought uptown with me, to my washerwoman the night before. The bill was not due, but Mrs. Jones wanted it for Thanksgiving and so I let her have it. And yet, gentlemen—would you believe it!—I walked on, trying to think if there mightn't be some bills in the vest I'd worn the day before, or in the top drawer of my desk or in a china cup on the mantel. Really, it was an awful, awful position! I couldn't run! I couldn't explain. I just had to keep on.

"When I got here I turned up the light and asked

him to sit down while I searched my clothes—you can see what disgrace does for a man—asked a common, low, vulgar waiter to sit down in my room. He didn't sit down—he just kept walking round and round, peering into the bookcases, handling the little things on the mantel, feeling the quality of the curtain that hangs there at the door—like a pawnbroker making up an inventory.

"Finally he said: 'Ye got a nice place here'—the first words that had come from his lips since we left the restaurant. 'The boss likes these jimcracks; he's got a lot o' thim up where he lives. I seen him pay twinty dollars to a Jew-dago for one o' *thim.*' And he pointed to my row of miniatures.

"By this time I was face to face with the awful truth. There was nothing in the vest-pocket, nor in the cup, and there was nothing in the drawer. The only money I had was the two-dollar bill which had been left over after paying Mrs. Jones. I spread it out before him and looked him straight in the eye—fearlessly—that he might know I wasn't telling him an untruth.

"'My good man,' I said in my kindest voice, 'I was mistaken. I find I have no money. I have paid away every cent except these two dollars; take this bill and let me come in to-morrow and pay the balance.'

"'Good man be damned!' he said. 'I don't want yer two dollars. I'll take this and call it square.' Then he put my precious Cosway in his pocket and without another word walked out of the room."

"But wouldn't they give it back to you when you went for it?" I blurted out.

Peter leaned back in his chair and drummed on the arm with his fingers.

"To tell the truth, I have been ashamed to go. I suppose they will give it back when I ask them. And every day I intended going and paying them the money, and every day I shun the street as if a plague was there. I will go some time, but not now. Please don't ask me."

"Have you seen none of them since?" inquired another of his visitors.

"Only the Bostonian. He walked up to me while I was having my lunch in Nassau Street yesterday.

"'I came out better than you did,' he said. 'The pass was good. I used it the next day. Just home from the Hub.'"

"Accomplice, maybe," remarked Peter's third visitor, "just fooling you with that architect yarn."

"Buncoed that pass out of somebody else," suggested the second visitor.

"Perhaps," Peter continued. "I give it up. It's one of the things that can never be explained. The Bostonian was polite, but he still thinks me a cheat. He let me down as easy as he could, being a gentleman, but I can never forget that he saw me come in with them and order the dinner, and that then I tried to sneak out of paying for it. Oh, it's dreadful! Dreadful!"

Peter settled in his seat until only the top of his red skull cap showed above the back of his easy chair. For some minutes he did not speak, then he said slowly, and as if talking to himself:

"Mean, mean people to serve me so!"

Some days later I again knocked at Peter's door. I had determined, with or without his consent, to go myself to Foscari's, redeem the miniature and explain the circumstances, and let them know exactly who Peter was. My hand had hardly touched the panel when his cheery voice rang out:

"Whoever you are, come in!"

He had sprung from his chair now and had advanced to greet me.

"Oh, is it you! So glad—come over here before you get your coat off. Look!"

"The Cosway! You paid the bill and redeemed it?"

"Didn't cost me a cent."

"They sent it to you, then, and apologized?"

"Nothing of the kind. Give me your hat and coat and plump yourself down on that chair by the fire. I've got the most extraordinary story to tell you you've ever heard in your whole life."

He was himself again—the same bubbling spirit, the same warmth in his manner, foxes out frolicking, lighthouse flashing, everything let loose.

"Last night I was sitting here at my desk writing, about nine o'clock, as near as I can remember"—his voice dropped now to a tragic whisper, as if an encounter with a burglar was to follow—"*when-I-heard-a-heavy-tread-on-the-stairs,* getting louder and louder as it reached my door. Then came a knock strong enough to crack the panels. I got up at once and turned the knob. In the corridor stood the Large Man. He was inside before I could stop him—I couldn't have stopped him. You have no idea, my dear friend, how big and strong that man is. What he expected to see I don't know, but it evidently was not what he found.

"'I had a hell of a time finding you,' he began, looking about him in astonishment. 'Been up and down everywhere inquiring. Only got your number from that red-headed plate-shover half an hour ago.'"

Peter's voice had now regained its customary volume:

"I had backed to the fireplace by this time and had picked up the poker, as if to punch the fire, but I really intended to strike him if he advanced too close or tried to help himself to any of my things. He never took the slightest notice of my movements, or waited for any answer to his outburst—just kept right on talking.

"'You were so dead easy there warn't no fun in it. I dropped to that the first time you opened your head, but Sam had picked you out and it had to go at that. My wife saw his mistake as soon as she got her eyes on you, but Sam, like a fool, wouldn't listen. He was to do the picking, and so I couldn't say a word. When we all got outside, clear, we took a turn around Washington Square so I could have my laugh out on Sam, and when we got back you were gone and so was the fellow from Boston who chipped in, and so was that red-headed Irish waiter. That knocked us silly—wife gave us rats, and I felt like a yellow dog. Been a-feeling so ever since. The Dago couldn't or wouldn't understand. Said we'd better come in when the boss was there. We had to take the eleven o'clock to Boston that night and had only time to catch the train. When I got back at

six-ten to-night I drove to Foscari's, found the Irishman and the boss, heard how he'd pulled your leg—paid the bill—$9.60, wasn't it?—that's what he said it was, anyhow—and here's your picture!'

"I had dropped the poker now and was motioning him to a chair.

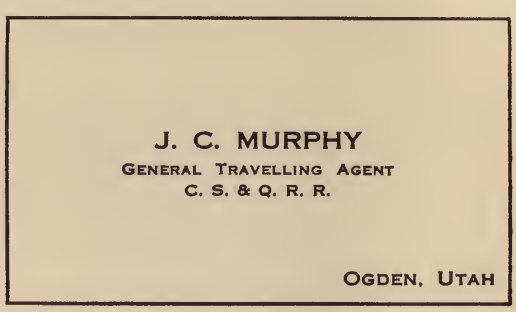
"'No, thank you, I won't sit down; ain't got time. Got to take the eleven forty-five for Chicago. Well, we had a lot of fun out of it, anyhow, only I didn't intend it should end up the way it did. Just wanted to get even with Sam and win my bet.'

"'Bet?' I asked. I was still in the dark as to what he meant.

"'Yes—bet Sam I'd bunco any New York man he'd pick out, and you happened to be the one. You see, wife and I and Sam were here for a few days and we struck Thanksgiving and wanted some fun, and we *had* it. You're white, old man all the way through—white as cotton and our kind—never flunked once, or turned a hair. Sally took an awful shine to you. Shake! Next time I'm in New York I'll look you up and if you ever come out our way we'll open a keg o' nails, and make it red-hot for you, and don't you forget it. Here's my card, so you can remember.'"

Peter picked up the card from the table, threw up

his chin, and broke into one of his infectious laughs. I reached over and took it from his hand. It bore this inscription:



MISS JENNINGS'S COMPANION

MISS JENNINGS'S COMPANION

The big Liner slowed down and dropped anchor inside the Breakwater. Sweeping toward her, pushing the white foam in long lines from her bow, her flag of black smoke trailing behind, came the company's tender—out from Cherbourg with passengers.

Under the big Liner's upper deck, along its top rail, was strung a row of heads watching the tender's approach—old heads—young heads—middle-aged heads—Miss Jennings's among these last—their eyes taking in the grim Breakwater with its beacon light, the frowning casemates specked with sentinels, and the line of the distant city blurred with masts and spent steam. They saw, too, from their height (they could look down the tender's smokestack) the sturdy figure of her Captain, his white cap in relief against the green sea, and below him the flat mass of people, their upturned faces so many pats of color on a dark canvas.

With the hauling taut and making fast of the fore and aft hawsers, a group of sailors broke away from

the flat mass and began tugging at the gangplank, lifting it into position, the boatswain's orders ringing clear. Another group stripped off the tarpaulins from the piles of luggage, and a third—the gangplank in place—swarmed about the heaps of trunks, shouldering the separate pieces as ants shoulder grains of sand, then scurrying toward the tender's rail, where other ants reached down and relieved them of their loads.

The mass of people below now took on the shape of a funnel, its spout resting on the edge of the gangplank, from out which poured a steady stream of people up and over the Liner's side.

Two decks below where Miss Jennings and her fellow-travellers were leaning over the steamer's rail craning their necks, other sights came into view. Here not only the funnel-shaped mass could be seen, but the faces of the individuals composing it, as well as their nationality and class; whether first, second or steerage. Here, too, was the line of stewards reaching out with open hands, relieving the passengers of their small belongings; here too stood the First Officer in white gloves and gold lace bowing to those he knew and smiling at others; and here too was a smooth-shaven, closely-knit young man in dark clothes and derby hat, who had taken up his position just behind the First Officer, and whose steady steel

gray eyes followed the movements of each and every one of the passengers from the moment their feet touched the gangplank until they had disappeared in charge of the stewards.

These passengers made a motley group: first came a stout American with two pretty daughters; then a young Frenchman and his valet; then a Sister of Charity draped in black, her close-fitting, white, starched cap and broad white collar framing her face, one hand clutching the rope rail as she stepped feebly toward the steamer, the other grasping a bandbox, her only luggage; next wriggled some college boys in twos and threes, and then the rest of the hurrying mass, followed close by a herd of emigrants crowding and stumbling like sheep, the men with pillow-case bundles over their backs, the women with babies muffled in shawls.

When the last passenger was aboard, the closely-knit young man with the steel gray eyes leaned forward and said in a low voice to the First Officer:

"He's not in this bunch."

"Sure?"

"Yes—dead sure."

"Where will you look for him now, Hobson?" continued the officer.

"Paris, maybe. I told the Chief we wouldn't get anywhere on this lead. Well, so long"—and the

closely-knit young man swung himself down the gangplank and disappeared into the cabin of the tender.

The scenes on the gangplank were now repeated on the steamer. The old travellers, whose hand luggage had been properly numbered, gave themselves no concern—the stewards would look after their belongings. The new travellers—the Sister of Charity among them—wandered about asking questions that for the moment no one had time to answer. She, poor soul, had spent her life in restful places, and the in-rush of passengers and their proper bestowal seemed to have completely dazed her.

"Can I help you?" asked the First Officer—everybody is ready to help a Sister, no matter what his rank or how pressing his duties.

"Yes, please—I want to know where my room is. It is Number 49, so my ticket says."

Here the Purser came up—he, too, would help a Sister.

"Sister Teresa, is it not—from the Convent of the Sacred Heart? Yes, we knew you would get on at Cherbourg. You are on the lower deck in the same stateroom with Miss Jennings. Steward—take the Sister to——"

"With whom?" she cried, with a look of blank amazement. "But I thought I was alone! They

told me so at the office. Oh, I cannot share my room with anybody. Please let——"

"Yes, but we had to double up. We would willingly give you a room alone, but there isn't an empty berth on board." He was telling the truth and showed it in his voice.

"But I have the money to pay for a whole room. I would have paid for it at the office in Paris, but they told me it was not necessary."

"I know, Sister, and I'm very sorry, but it can't be helped now. Steward, take Sister Teresa to Number 49." This last came as an order, and ended the discussion.

When the Steward pushed open the door Miss Jennings was sitting on the sofa berth reading, a long gray cloak about her shoulders. She had a quiet, calm face and steady eyes framed in gold spectacles. She looked to be a woman of fifty who had seen life and understood it.

"The officer says I am to share your room," began Sister Teresa in a trembling voice. "Don't think me rude, please, but I don't want to share your room. I want to be alone, and so do you. Can't you help me?"

"But I don't mind it, and you won't after you get used to it." The voice was poised and well modu-

lated—evidently a woman without nerves—a direct, masterful sort of woman, who looked you straight in the eyes, was without guile, hated a lie and believed in human nature. "And we ought to get on together," she continued simply, as if it were a matter of course. "You are a Sister, and from one of the French institutions—I recognize your dress. I'm a nurse from the London Hospital. The First Officer told me you had the other berth and I was looking for you aboard the Cherbourg tender, but I couldn't see you for the smoke, you were so far below me. We'll get on together, never fear. Which bed will you have—this one or the one curtained off?"

"Oh, do you take the one curtained off," she answered in a hopeless tone, as if further resistance was useless. "The sofa is easier perhaps for me, for I always undress in the dark."

"No, turn on the light. It won't wake me—I'm used to sleeping anywhere—sometimes bolt upright in my chair with my hand on my patient."

"But it is one of the rules of our order to dress and undress in the dark," the Sister pleaded; "candles are luxuries only used for the sick, and so we do without them."

"All right—just as you say," rejoined Miss Jennings cheerily. "My only desire was to make you comfortable."

That night at dinner Sister Teresa and Nurse Jennings found themselves seated next to each other, the Chief Steward, who had special orders from the First Officer to show Miss Jennings and her companion every courtesy, having conducted them to their seats.

Before the repast was half over, the two had attracted the attention of all about them. What was particularly noticed was the abstemious self-denying life of the Sister so plainly shown in the lines of her grave, almost hard, face, framed close in the tight bands of white linen concealing every vestige of her hair, the whole in strong contrast to the kind, sympathetic face of the Nurse, whose soft gray locks hung loosely about her temples. Their history, gleaned at the First Officer's table had also become public property. Nurse Jennings had served two years in South Africa, where she had charge of a ward in one of the largest field hospitals outside of Pretoria; on her return to England, she had been placed over an important case in one of the London hospitals—that of a gallant Canadian officer who had been shipped home convalescent, and who had now sent for her to come to him in Montreal. The good Sister was one of those unfortunate women who had been expelled from France under the new law, and who was now on her way to Quebec, there to take up her life-work

again. This had been the fifth refugee, the officer added, whom the Line had cared for.

When the hour for retiring came, Sister Teresa, with the remark that she would wait until Miss Jennings was in bed before she sought her own berth, followed her companion to the stateroom, bade her good-night, and then, with her hand on the knob, lingered for a moment as if there was still some further word on her lips.

"What is it?" asked the Nurse, with one of her direct, searching glances. "Speak out—I'm a woman like yourself, and can understand."

"Well, it's about the Hour of Silence. I must have one hour every day when I can be alone. It has been the custom of my life and I cannot omit it. It will be many days before we reach the land, and there is no other place for me to pray except in here. Would you object if I——"

"Object! Of course not! I will help you to keep it, and I will see, too, that the Stewardess does not disturb you. Now, is there anything else? Tell me —I love people who speak right out what they mean."

"No—except that I always rise at dawn, and will be gone when you wake. Good-night."

The morning after this first night the two lay in their steamer chairs on the upper deck. The First

Officer, noticing them together, paused for a moment on his way to the bridge:

"You knew, of course, Miss Jennings, that Hobson went back to Cherbourg on the tender. He left good-by for you."

"Hunting for somebody, as usual, I suppose?" she rejoined.

"Yes"—and he passed on.

"A wretched life, isn't it," said Nurse Jennings, "this hunting for criminals? This same man, Mr. Hobson, after a hunt of months, found one in my ward with a bullet through his chest."

"You know him then?" asked Sister Teresa, with a tremor in her voice.

"Yes—he's a Scotland Yard man."

"And you say he was looking for some one on board and didn't find him?"

"No, not yet, but he will find him, he always does; that's the pity of it. Some of these poor hunted people would lead a different life if they had another chance. I tried to save the one Hobson found in my ward. He was quite frank with me, and told me everything. When people trust me my heart always goes out to them—so much so that I often do very foolish things that are apt to get me into trouble. It's when they lie to me—and so many do—making one excuse after another for their being in the ward

—that I lose all interest in them. I pleaded with Hobson to give the man another chance, but I could do nothing. Thief as he was, he had told the truth. He had that quality left, and I liked him for it. If I had known Hobson was on his track I'd have helped him in some way to get off. He stole to help his old mother, and wasn't a criminal in any sense—only weak-hearted. The law is cruel—it never makes allowances—that's where it is wrong."

"Cruel!—it's brutal. It is more brutal often than the crime," answered Sister Teresa in a voice full of emotion. "Do you think the man your friend was looking for here on board will escape?"

"No, I'm afraid not. There is very little chance of any criminal escaping when they once get on his track, so Mr. Hobson has told me. If he is on this steamer he must run another gauntlet in New York, even if he is among the emigrants. You know we have over a thousand on board. If he is not aboard they will track him down. Dreadful, isn't it?"

"Poor fellow," said Sister Teresa, a sob in her voice, "how sorry I am for him. If men only knew how much wiser mercy is than justice in the redemption of the world." Here she rose from her chair, and gathering her black cloak about her crossed to the rail and looked out to sea. In a few minutes she

returned. "Let us walk out to the bow where we can talk undisturbed," she said. "The constant movement of the passengers on deck, passing backward and forward, disturbs my head. I see so few people, you know."

When they reached the bow, she made a place beside her for the Nurse.

"Don't misunderstand what I said about the brutality of the law," she began. "There must be laws, and brutal men who commit brutal crimes must be punished. But there are so many men who are not brutal, although the crimes may be. I knew of one once. We had educated his little daughter—such a sweet child! The man himself was a scene-painter and worked in the theatres in London. Sometimes he would take part in the play himself, making up for the minor characters, although most of his time was spent in painting scenery. He had married a woman who was on the stage, and she had deserted him for one of the actors, and left her child behind. Her faithlessness nearly broke his heart. Through one of our own people in London he found us and sent the child to the convent where we have a school for just such cases. When the girl got to be seventeen years old he sent for her and she went to London to see him. He remembered her mother's career, and guarded her like a little plant. He never allowed her

to come to the theatre except in the middle of the day. Then she would come where he was at work up on the top of the painting platform high above the stage. There he and she would be alone. One morning while he was at work one of the scene-shifters—a man with whom he had had some difficulty—met the girl as she was crossing the high platform. He had never seen her before and, thinking she was one of the chorus girls, threw his arm about her. The girl screamed, the scene-painter dropped his brushes, ran to her side, hit the man in the face—the scene-shifter lost his balance and fell to the stage. Before he died in the hospital he told who had struck him; he told why, too; that the scene-painter hated him; and that the two had had an altercation the day before—about some colors; which was not true, there only having been a difference of opinion. The man fled to Paris with his daughter. The girl today is at one of our institutions at Rouen. The detectives, suspecting that he would try to see her, have been watching that place for the last five months. All that time he has been employed in the garden of a convent out of Paris. Last week we heard from a Sister in London that some one had recognized him, although he had shaved off his beard—some visitor or parent of one of the children, perhaps, who had come upon him suddenly while at work in the garden beds. He is

now a fugitive, hunted like an animal. He never intended to harm this man—he only tried to save his daughter—and yet he knew that because of the difficulty that he had had with the dead man and the fact that his daughter's testimony would not help him—she being an interested person—he would be made to suffer for a crime he had not intended to commit. Now, would you hand this poor father over to the police? In a year his daughter must leave the convent. She then has no earthly protection."

Miss Jennings gazed out over the sea, her brow knit in deep thought. Her mind went back to the wounded criminal in the hospital cot and to the look of fear and agony that came into his eyes when Hobson stood over him and called him by name. Sister Teresa sat watching her companion's face. Her whole life had been one of mercy and she never lost an opportunity to plead its cause.

The Nurse's answer came slowly:

"No, I would not. There is misery enough in the world without my adding to it."

"Would you help him to escape?"

"Yes, if what you tell me is true and he trusted me."

Sister Teresa rose to her feet, crossed herself, and said in a voice that seemed to come through pent-up tears:

"Thank God! I go now to pray. It is my Hour of Silence."

When she returned, Nurse Jennings was still in her seat in the bow. The sun shone bright and warm, and the sea had become calm."

"You look rested, Sister," she said, looking up into her face. "Your color is fresher and the dark rings have gone from your eyes. Did you sleep?"

"No, I wait for the night to sleep. It is hard enough then."

"What did you do?"

"I prayed for you and for myself. Come to the stateroom—I have something to tell you."

"Tell it here," said Nurse Jennings in a more positive tone.

"No, it might hurt you, and others will notice. Come quick, please, or my courage will fail."

"Can't I hear it to-night——" She was comfortable where she was and remembered the narrow, steep steps to the lower deck.

"No! come now—and *quick.*"

At the tone of agony in the Sister's voice Miss Jennings scrutinized her companion's face. Her trained ear had caught an indrawn, fluttering sob which she recognized as belonging to a certain form of hysteria. Brooding over her troubles, combined

with the effects of the sea air, had unstrung the dear Sister's nerves.

"Yes, certainly," assented Miss Jennings. "Let me take your arm—step carefully, and lean on me."

On reaching the stateroom, Sister Teresa waited until Miss Jennings had entered, then she locked the door and pulled the curtains close.

"Listen, Miss Jennings, before you judge me. You remember yesterday how I pleaded with you to help me find a bedroom where I could be alone. You would not, and I could do nothing but let matters take their course. Fate has placed me in your hands. When you said that you were on the lookout for me and that you knew Hobson, the detective, I knew that all was lost unless your heart went out to me. I know him, too. I faced his eyes when I came aboard. I staggered with fright and caught at the ropes, but he did not suspect—I saw in his face that he did not. He may still trace me and arrest me when I land. If anybody comes for me, say you met me in the hospital where you work."

Nurse Jennings stood staring into the woman's eyes. Her first impulse was to ring the bell for the Steward and send for the ship's doctor. Sudden insanity, the result of acute hysteria, was not uncommon in women leading sedentary lives who had gone

through a heavy strain, and the troubles of this poor Sister had, she saw, unseated her reason.

"Don't talk so—calm yourself. No one is seeking you. You ought to lie down. Come——"

"Yes, I know you think I am crazy—I am crazy—crazy from a horrible fear that stares me in the face—from a spectre that——"

"Sister, you *must* lie down! I'll ring for the Doctor and he——"

Sister Teresa sprang forward and caught the hand of the Nurse before it touched the bell.

"Stop! *Stop!*—or all will be lost! I am not a Sister—I am the scene-painter—the father of that girl! See!" He threw back his hood, uncovering his head and exposed his short-cropped hair.

Nurse Jennings turned quickly and looked her companion searchingly in the face. The surprise had been so great that for an instant her breath left her. Then slowly the whole situation rushed over and upon her. This man had made use of her privacy—had imposed upon her—tricked her.

"And you—you have dared to come into this room, making me believe you were a woman—and lied to me about your Hour of Silence and all the——"

"It was the only way I could be safe. You and everybody else would detect me if I did not shave

and fix up my face. You said a minute ago the dark rings had gone from my eyes—it is this paint-box that did it. Think of what it would mean to me to be taken—and my little girl! Don't—don't judge me wrongly. When I get to New York I promise never to see you again—no one will ever know. If you had been my own sister I could not have treated you with more respect since I have been in the room. I will do anything you wish—to-night I will sleep on the floor—anything, if——"

"To-night! Not another hour will you stay here. I will go to the Purser at once and——"

"You mean to turn me out?"

"Yes."

"Oh, merciful God! Don't! Listen—you *must* listen. Let me stay! What difference should it make to you. You have nursed hundreds of men. You have saved many lives. Save mine—give me back my little girl! She can come to me in Quebec and then we can get away somewhere in America and be safe. I can still pass as a Sister and she as a child in my charge until I can find some place where I can throw off my disguise. See how good the real Sisters are to me; they do not condemn me. Here is a letter from the Mother Superior in Paris to the Mother Superior of a convent in Quebec. It is not forged—it is genuine. If they believe in me, why

cannot you? Let me stay here, and you stay, too. You would if you could see my child."

The sound of a heavy step was heard outside in the corridor.

Then came a quick, commanding voice: "Miss Jennings, open the door, please."

The Nurse turned quickly and made a step toward the door. The fugitive sank upon the sofa and drew the hood over his face.

Again her name rang out—this time in a way that showed them both that further delay was out of the question.

Nurse Jennings shot back the bolt.

Outside stood the First Officer.

"There has been a bad accident in the steerage. I hate to ask you, Miss Jennings, knowing how tired you are—but one of the emigrants has fallen down the forecastle hatch. The Doctor wants you to come at once."

During the rest of the voyage Nurse Jennings slept in the steerage; she would send to Number 49 during the day for her several belongings, but she never passed the night there, nor did she see her companion. The case was serious, she told the Stewardess, who came in search of her, and she dared not leave.

The fugitive rarely left the stateroom. Some days he pleaded illness and had his meals brought to him; often he ate nothing.

As the day approached for the vessel to arrive in New York a shivering nervousness took possession of him. He would stand behind the door by the hour listening for her lightest footfall, hoping against hope that, after all, her heart would soften toward him. One thought absorbed him: would she betray him, and if so, when and where? Would it be to the First Officer—the friend of Hobson—or would she wait until they reached New York and then hand him over to the authorities?

Only one gleam of hope shone out illumining his doubt, and that was that she never sent to the stateroom during the Hour of Silence, thus giving him a chance to continue his disguise. Even this ray was dimmed when he began to realize as they approached their destination that she had steadily avoided him, even choosing another deck for a breath of fresh air whenever she left her patient. That she had welcomed the accident to the emigrant as an excuse for remaining away from her stateroom was evident. What he could not understand was, if she really pitied and justified him, as she had done his prototype, why she should now treat him with such suspicion. At her request he had opened his heart and had trusted

her; why then could she not forgive him for the deceit of that first night—one for which he was not responsible?

Then a new thought chilled him like an icy wind: her avoidance of him was only an evidence of her purpose! Thus far she had not exposed him, because then it would be known aboard that they had shared the stateroom together. He saw it all now. She was waiting until they reached the dock. Then no one would be the wiser.

When the steamer entered her New York slip and the gangplank was hoisted aboard, another thick-set, closely-knit man pushed his way through the crowd at the rail, walked straight to the Purser and whispered something in his ear. The next moment he had glided to where the Nurse and fugitive were standing.

"This is Miss Jennings, isn't it? I'm from the Central Office," and he opened his coat and displayed the gold shield. "We've just got a cable from Hobson. He said you were on board and might help. I'm looking for a man. We've got no clew—don't know that he's on board, but I thought we'd look the list over. The Purser tells me that you helped the Doctor in the steerage—says somebody had been smashed up. Got anything to suggest?—anybody that would fit this description: 'Small man, only five-

"He's a slick one, we hear, and may be working a stunt in disguise."

feet-six; blue eyes' "—and he read from a paper in his hand.

"No, I don't think so. I was in the steerage, of course, four or five days, and helped on a bad case, but I didn't notice anybody but the few people immediately about me."

"Perhaps, then, among the first-class passengers? Anybody peculiar there? He's a slick one, we hear, and may be working a stunt in disguise."

"No. To tell you the truth, I was so tired when I came aboard that I hardly spoke to any one—no one, really, except my dear Sister Teresa here, who shared my stateroom. They have driven her out of France and she is on her way to a convent in Quebec. I go with her as far as Montreal."

SAM JOPLIN'S EPIGASTRIC NERVE

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I

"You eat too much, Marny." It was Joplin, of Boston, who was speaking—Samuel Epigastric Joplin, his brother painters called him. "You treat your stomach as if it were a scrap-basket and you dump into it everything you——"

"I do? You caricature of a codfish ball!"

"Yes, you do. You open your mouth, pin back your ears and in go pickles, red cabbage, Dutch cheese. It's insanity, Marny, and it's vulgar. No man's epigastric can stand it. It wouldn't make any difference if you were a kangaroo with your pouch on the outside, but you're a full-grown man and ought to have some common-sense."

"And you think that if I followed your idiotic theory it would keep me out of my coffin, do you? What you want, Joppy, is a square meal. You never had one, so far as I can find out, since you were born. You drank sterilized milk at blood temperature until you were five; chewed patent, unhulled wheat bread until you were ten, and since that time

you've filled your stomach with husks—proteids, and carbohydrates, and a lot of such truck—isn't that what he calls em, Pudfut?"

The Englishman nodded in assent.

"And now just look at you, Joppy, instead of a forty-inch chest——"

"And a sixty-inch waist," interjected Joplin with a laugh, pointing at Marny's waistcoat.

"I acknowledge it, old man, and I'm proud of it," retorted Marny, patting his rotundity. "Instead, I say, of a decent chest your shoulders crowd your breast-bone; your epigastric, as you call it—it's your solar plexus, Joppy—but that's a trifle to an anatomist like you—your epigastric scrapes your backbone, so lonely is it for something warm and digestible to rub up against, and your— Why, Joppy, do you know when I look at you and think over your wasted life, my eyes fill with tears? Eat something solid, old man, and give your stomach a surprise. Begin now. Dinner's coming up—I smell it. Open your port nostril, you shrivelled New England bean, and take in the aroma of beatific pork and greens. Doesn't that put new life into you? Puddy, you and Schönholz help Joppy to his feet and one or two of you fellows walk behind to pick up the pieces in case he falls apart before we can feed him. There's Tine's dinner-bell!"

White-capped, rosy-cheeked, bare-armed Tine had rung that bell for this group of painters for two years past—ever since Mynheer Boudier of the Bellevue over the way, who once claimed her services, had reproved Johann, the porter, for blocking up with the hotel trunks that part of the sidewalk over which the steamboat captain slid his gangplank. Thereupon Tine slipped her pretty little feet into her white sabots—she and Johann have been called in church since—and walked straight over to the Holland Arms. Johann now fights the steamboat captain, backed not only by the landlord of the Arms, who rubs his hands in glee over the possession of two of his competitor's best servants, but by the whole coterie of painters whose boots Johann blacks, whose kits he packs and unpacks, whose errands he runs; while Tine, no less loyal and obliging, darns their stockings, mends their clothes, sews on buttons, washes brushes, stretches canvases, waits on table, rings the dinner-bell, and with her own hands scrubs every square inch of visible surface inside and out of this quaint old inn in this sleepy old town of Dort-on-the-Maas—sidewalks, windows, cobbles—clear to the middle of the street, her ruddy arms bare to the elbow, her sturdy, blue-yarn-stockinged legs thrust into snow-white sabots to keep her trim feet from the wet and slop.

Built in 1620, this inn of the Holland Arms—so the mildewed brick in the keystone over the arch of the doorway says—and once the home of a Dutchman made rich by the China trade, whose ships cast anchor where Fop Smit's steamboats now tie up (I have no interest in the Line); a grimy, green-moulded, lean-over front and moss-covered, sloping-roof sort of an inn, with big beams supporting the ceilings of the bedrooms; lumbering furniture blackened with the smoke of a thousand pipes flanking the walls of the coffee-room; bits of Delft a century old lining the mantel; tiny panes of glass with here and there a bull's-eye illumining the squat windows; rows of mugs with pewter tops crowding the narrow shelves beside the fireplace, and last, and by no means least, a big, bulky sun-moon-and-stars clock, with one eye always open, which strikes the hours as if it meant to beat the very life out of them.

But there is something more in this coffee-room—something that neither Mynheer Boudier of the Bellevue nor any other landlord in any other hostelry, great or small, up and down the Maas, can boast. This is the coffee-room picture gallery—free to whoever comes.

It began with a contribution from the first impecunious painter in payment of an overdue board-bill, his painting being hung on a nail beside the clock.

Now; all over the walls—above the sideboard with its pewter plates and queer mugs; over the mantel holding the Delft, and between the squat windows—are pinned, tacked, pasted and hung—singly and in groups—sketches in oil, pastel, water color, pencil and charcoal, many without frames and most of them bearing the signature of some poor, stranded painter, preceded by the suggestive line, "To my dear friend, the landlord"—silent reminders all of a small cash balance which circumstances quite beyond their control had prevented their liquidating at the precise hour of their departure.

Mynheer had bowed and smiled as each new contribution was handed him and straightway had found a hammer and a nail and up it went beside its fellows. He never made objection: the more the merrier. The ice wind would soon blow across the Maas from Papendrecht, the tall grasses in the marshes turn pale with fright, and the lace-frost with busy fingers pattern the tiny panes, and then Johann would pack the kits one after another, and the last good-byes take place. But the sketches would remain. Oh! yes, the sketches would remain and tell the story of the summer and every night new mugs would be filled around the coal-fire, and new pipes lighted—mugs and pipes of the *townspeople* this time, who came to feast their eyes,—and, although the summer was gone,

the long winter would still be his. No, Mynheer never objected!

And this simple form of settlement—a note of hand (in color), payable in yearly patronage—has not been confined to modern times. Many an inn owes its survival to a square of canvas—the head of a child, a copper pot, or stretch of dune; and more than one collector now boasts of a masterpiece which had hung for years on some taproom wall, a sure but silent witness of the poverty of a Franz Hals, Wouverman or Van der Helst.

Each year had brought new additions to the impecunious group about Mynheer's table.

Dear old Marny, with his big boiler amidships, his round, sunburned face shaded by a wide-brimmed, slouch hat—the one he wore when he lived with the Sioux Indians—loose red tie tossed over one shoulder, and rusty velveteen coat, was an old habitué. And so was dry, crusty Malone, "the man from Dublin," rough outside as a potato and white inside as its meal. And so, too, was Stebbins, the silent man of the party, and the only listener in the group. All these came with the earliest birds and stayed until the boys got out their skates.

But there were others this year who were new. Pudfut, the Englishman, first—in from Norway, where he had been sketching on board some lord's

yacht—he of the grizzly brown beard, brown ulster reaching to his toes, gray-checked steamer-cap and brierwood pipe—an outfit which he never changed—"slept in them," Marny insisted.

"Me name's Pudfut," he began, holding out his hand to Marny. "I've got a letter in my clothes for ye from a chap in Paris."

"Don't pull it out," had come the answer. "Put it there!" and within an hour the breezy fellow, his arm through the Englishman's, had trotted him all over Dort from the Groote Kerk to the old Gate of William of Orange, introducing him to every painter he met on the way, first as Pudfut, then as Puddy, then as Pretty-foot, then as Tootsie-Wootsie, and last as Toots—a name by which he is known in the Quartier to this day. This done, he had taken him up to his own room and had dumped him into an extra cot—his for the rest of the summer.

Then Schönholz wandered in—five gulden a week board was the magnet—a cheese-faced, good-natured German lad with forehead so high that when he raised his hat Marny declared, with a cry of alarm, that his scalp had slipped, and only regained his peace of mind when he had twisted his fat fingers in the lad's forelock to make sure that it was still fast. Schönholz had passed a year at Heidelberg and carried his diploma on his cheek—two crisscross slashes

that had never healed—spoke battered English, wore a green flat-topped cap, and gray bobtailed coat with two rows of horn buttons ("Come to shoot chamois, have you?" Marny had asked when he presented his credentials.)—laughed three-quarters of the time he was awake, and never opened his kit or set a palette while he was in Dort. "Too vet and too fodgy all dime," was the way he accounted for his laziness.

Last came Joplin—a man of thirty-five; bald as an egg and as shiny. ("Dangerous to have a hen around," Marny would say, rubbing the pate after the manner of a phrenologist.) Gaunt, wiry; jerky in his movements as a Yankee clock and as regular in his habits: hot water when he got up—two glasses, sipped slowly; cold water when he went to bed, head first, feet next, then the rest of him; window open all night no matter how hard it blew or rained; ate three meals a day and no more; chewed every mouthful of food thirty times—coffee, soup, even his drinking-water (Gladstone had taught him that, he boasted)—a walking laboratory of a man, who knew it all, took no layman's advice, and was as set in his ways as a chunk of concrete.

And his fads did not stop with his food; they extended to his clothes—everything he used, in fact. His baggy knickerbockers ended in leather leggins to protect his pipe-stem shanks; his shirts buttoned

all the way down in front and went on like a coat; he wore health flannels by day and a health shirt at night ("Just like my old Aunt Margaret's wrapper," whispered Marny in a stage voice to Pudfut); sported a ninety-nine-cent silver watch fastened to a leather strap (sometimes to a piece of twine); stuck a five-hundred-dollar scarab pin in his necktie—"Nothing finer in the Boston Museum," he maintained, and told the truth—and ever and always enunciated an English so pure and so undefiled that Stebbins, after listening to it for a few minutes, proposed, with an irreverence born of good-fellowship, that a subscription be started to have Joplin's dialect phonographed so that it might be handed down to posterity as the only real and correct thing.

"Are you noticing, gentlemen, the way in which Joplin handles his mother tongue?" Stebbins had shouted across the table: "never drops his 'g's,' never slights his first syllable; says '*hu*mor' with an accent on the '*hu.*' But for the fact that he pronounces 'bonnet' '*bunnit*' and 'admires' a thing when he really ought only to 'like' it, you could never discover his codfish bringing up. Out with your wallets—how much do you chip in?"

These peculiarities soon made Joplin the storm-centre of every discussion. Not only were his views on nutrition ridiculed, but all his fads were treated

with equal disrespect. "Impressionism," "plein air," the old "line engraving" in contrast to the modern "half-tone" methods—any opinion of Joplin's, no matter how sane or logical, was jostled, sat on, punched in the ribs and otherwise maltreated until every man was breathless or black in the face with assumed rage—every man except the man jostled, who never lost his temper no matter what the provocation, and who always came up smiling with some such remark as: "Smite away, you Pharisees; harmony is heavenly—but stupid. Keep it up—here's the other cheek!"

On this particular night Joplin, as I have said, had broken out on diet. Some movement of Marny's connected with the temporary relief of the lower button of his waistcoat had excited the great Bostonian's wrath. The men were seated at dinner inside the coffee-room, Johann and Tine serving.

"Yes, Marny, I'm sorry to say it, but the fact is you eat too much and you eat the wrong things. If you knew anything of the kinds of food necessary to nourish the human body, you would know that it should combine in proper proportions proteid, fats, carbohydrates and a small percentage of inorganic salts—these are constantly undergoing oxidation and at the same time are liberating energy in the form of heat."

"Hear the bloody bounder!" bawled Pudfut from the other end of the table.

"Silence!" called Marny, with his ear cupped in his fingers, an expression of the farthest-away-boy-in-the-class on his face.

Joplin waved his hand in protest and continued, without heeding the interruption: "Now, if you're stupid enough to stuff your epigastrium with pork, you, of course, get an excess of non-nitrogenous fats, and in order to digest anything properly you must necessarily cram in an additional quantity of carbohydrates—greens, potatoes, cabbage—whatever Tine shoves under your nose. Consult any scientist and see if I am not right—especially the German doctors who have made a specialty of nutrition. Such men as Fugel, Beenheim and——"

Here a slice of Tine's freshly-cut bread made a line-shot, struck the top of Joplin's scalp, caromed on Schönholz's shirt-front and fell into Stebbins's lap, followed instantly by "Order, gentlemen!" from Marny. "Don't waste that slab of proteid. The learned Bean is most interesting and should not be interrupted."

"Better out than in," continued Joplin, brushing the crumbs from his plate. "Bread—fresh bread particularly—is the very worst thing a man can put into his stomach."

"And how about pertaties?" shouted Malone. "I s'pose ye'd rob us of the only thing that's kep' us alive as a nation, wouldn't ye?"

"I certainly would, 'Loney, except in very small quantities. Raw potatoes contain twenty-two per cent. of the worst form of non-nitrogenous food, and seventy-eight per cent. of water. You, Malone, with your sedentary habits, should never touch an ounce of potato. It excites the epigastric nerve and induces dyspepsia. You're as lazy as the devil and should only eat nitrogenous food and never in excess. What you require is about one hundred grams of protein, giving you a fuel value of twenty-seven hundred calories, and to produce this fifty-five ounces of food a day is enough. When you exceed this you run to flesh—unhealthy bloat really—and in the wrong places. You've only to look at Marny's sixty-inch waist-line to prove the truth of this theory. Now look at me—I keep my figure, don't I? Not a bad one for a light-weight, is it? I'm in perfect health, can run, jump, eat, sleep, paint, and but for a slight organic weakness with my heart, which is hereditary in my family and which kills most of us off at about seventy years of age, I'm as sound as a nut. And all—*all*, let me tell you, due to my observing a few scientific laws regarding hygiene which you men never seem to have heard of."

"Order, gentlemen! The learned Bean is most interesting and should not be interrupted."

Malone now rose to his feet, pewter mug in hand, and swept his eye around the table.

"Bedad, you're right, Joppy," he said with a wink at Marny—"food's the ruination of us all; drink is what we want. On yer feet, gintlemen—every mother's son of ye! Here's to the learned, livin' skeleton from Boston! Five per cint. man and ninety-five per cint. crank!"

II

The next morning the group of painters—all except Joplin, who was doing a head in "smears" behind the Groote Kerk a mile away—were at work in the old shipyard across the Maas at Papendrecht. Marny was painting a Dutch lugger with a brown-madder hull and an emerald-green stern, up on the ways for repairs. Pudfut had the children of the Captain posed against a broken windlass rotting in the tall grass near the dock, and Malone and Schönholz, pipe in mouth, were on their backs smoking. "It wasn't their kind of a mornin'," Malone had said.

Joplin's discourse the night before was evidently lingering in their minds, for Pudfut broke out with: "Got to sit on Joppy some way or we'll be talked to death," and he squeezed a tube of color on his palette. "Getting to be a bloody nuisance."

"Only one way to fix him," remarked Stebbins, picking up his mahlstick from the grass beside him.

"How?" came a chorus.

"Scare him to death."

The painters laid down their brushes. Stebbins rarely expressed an opinion; any utterance from him, therefore, carried weight.

"Go for him about his health, I tell you," continued Stebbins, dragging a brush from the sheaf in his hand.

"But there's nothing the matter with him," answered Marny. "He's as skinny as a coal-mine mule, but he's got plenty of kick in him yet."

"You're dead right, Marny," answered Stebbins, "but he doesn't think so. He's as big a fool over every little pain as he is over his theories."

"Niver cracked his jaw to me about it," sputtered Malone from between the puffs of his pipe.

"No, and he won't. I don't jump on him as you fellows do and so I get his confidence. He's in my room two or three times every night going over his symptoms. When his foot's asleep he thinks he's got creeping paralysis. Every time his breath comes short, his heart's giving out."

"That's hereditary!" said Marny; "he said so."

"Hereditary be hanged! Same with everything else. Last night he dug me out of bed and wanted

me to count his pulse—thought it intermitted. He's hipped, I tell you, on his health!"

"That's because he lives on nothing," rejoined Marny. "Tine puts the toast in the oven over night so it will be dry enough for him in the morning—she told me so yesterday. Now he's running on sour milk and vinegar—'blood too alkaline,' he says—got a chalky taste in his mouth!"

"Well, whatever it is, he's a rum-nuisance," said Pudfut, "and he ought to be jumped on."

"Yes," retorted Stebbins, "but not about his food. Jump on him about his health, then he'll kick back and in pure obstinacy begin to think he's well—that's his nature."

"Don't you do anything of the kind," protested Marny. "Joppy's all right—best lad I know. Let him talk; doesn't hurt anybody and keeps everything alive. A little hot air now and then helps his epigastric."

Malone and Schönholz had raised themselves on their elbows, twisted their shoulders and had put their heads together—literally—without lifting their lazy bodies from the warm, dry grass—so close that one slouch hat instead of two might have covered their conspiring brains. From under the rims of these thatches came smothered laughs and such unintelligible mutterings as:

"Dot's de vay, by chimminy, 'Loney! And den I——"

"No, begorra! Let me have a crack at him fu'st!"

"No, I vill before go and you come——"

"Not a word to Marny, remimber; he'd give it away——"

"Yes, but we vill tell Poodfut und Sthebbins, eh?"

That afternoon the diabolical plot was put in motion. The men had finished for the day; had crossed the ferry and had found Joplin wandering around the dock looking for a new subject. The Groote Kerk "smear" was under his arm.

Pudfut, under pretence of inspecting the smear—a portrait of the old Sacristan on a bench in front of the main entrance—started back in surprise on seeing the Bostonian, and asked with an anxious tone in his voice:

"Aren't you well, old man? Look awfully yellow about the gills. Worked too hard, haven't you? No use overdoing it."

"Well? Of course I'm well! Sound as a nut. Little bilious, maybe, but that's nothing. Why?"

"Oh, nothing! Must say, though, you gave me a twist when I came on you suddenly. Maybe it's your epigastric nerve; maybe it's your liver and will pass off, but I'd knock off work for a day or two if I were you."

Malone now took a hand.

"Let me carry yer kit, Joppy, ye look done up. What's happened to ye, man, since mornin'?"

"Never felt better in my life," protested Joplin. "No, I'll carry it—not heavy——"

Then he quickened his pace—they were all on their way back to the inn—and overtook Stebbins and Schönholz.

"Stebbins, old man——"

"Yes, Joppy."

"What I told you last night is turning out just as I expected. Heart's been acting queer all morning and my epigastric nerve is very sensitive. Puddy says I look awful. Do you see it?"

Stebbins looked into the Bostonian's face, hesitated, and said with an apologetic tone in his voice:

"Well, everybody looks better one time than another. You've been working too hard, maybe."

"But do I look yellow?"

"Well, to tell you the truth, Joppy, you do—yellow as a gourd—not always, just now and then when you walk fast or run upstairs."

"I've been afraid of that. Was my pulse all right when you counted it last night?"

"Yes, certainly—skipped a beat now and then, but that's nothing. I had an uncle once who had a pulse that wobbled like that. He, of course, went off

suddenly; some said it was apoplexy; some said it was his heart—these doctors never agree. I wouldn't worry about it, old man. Hold on, Pudfut, don't walk so fast."

Pudfut held on, and so did Schönholz and Malone, and then the four slipped behind a pile of oil barrels and concentrated their slouch hats and Schönholz slapped his thigh and said with a smothered laugh that it was "sphlendeed!" and Malone and Pudfut agreed, and then the three locked arms and went singing up the street, their eyes on Joplin's pipe-stem legs as he trotted beside Marny on his way to the inn.

When the party reached the coffee-room Marny called Tine to his side, spread out the fingers and thumb of one hand, and that rosy-cheeked lass without the loss of a second, clattered over to the little shelf, gathered up five empty mugs and disappeared down the cellar steps. This done the coterie drew their chairs to one of Tine's hand-scrubbed tables and sat down, all but Joplin, who kept on his way to his room. There the Bostonian remained, gazing out of the window until Johann had banged twice on his door in announcement of dinner. Then he joined the others.

When all were seated Schönholz made a statement which was followed with results more astounding to

the peace of the coterie than anything which had occurred since the men came together.

"I haf bad news, boys," he began, "offle bad news. Mine fader has wrote dat home I must. Nod anuder mark he say vill he gif me. Eef I could sell somedings—but dat ees very seldom. No, Marny, you don't can lend me noddings. What vill yourselluf do? Starve!"

"Where do you live, Schönholz?" asked Joplin.

"By Fizzenbad."

"What kind of a place is it—baths?"

"Yes."

"What are they good for?" continued Joplin in a subdued tone.

"Noddings, but blenty peoples go."

"I can tell you, Joppy," said Pudfut gravely, with a wink at Malone. "There are two spas, both highly celebrated. Lord Ellenboro spent a month there and came back looking like another man. One is for the liver and the other for something or other, I can't recollect what."

"Heart?" asked Joplin.

"I don't know."

He didn't,—had never heard the place mentioned until Schönholz had called its name a moment before.

Joplin played with his knife and made an attempt to nibble a slice of Tine's toast, but he made no reply.

All the fight of every kind seemed to have been knocked out of him.

"Better take Fizzenbad in, Joppy," remarked Pudfut in an undertone. "May do you a lot of good."

"How far is it, Schönholz?" asked Joplin, ignoring the Englishman's suggestion.

"Oh, you leafe in de morgen and you come by Fizzenbad in a day more as de one you go oud mid."

"No—can't afford it."

Here Joplin pushed back his chair, and with the remark that he thought he would go downtown for some colors, left the room.

"It's working like a dose of salts," cried Pudfut when the Bostonian was out of hearing. "Hasn't said 'epigastric nerve,' 'gram' or 'proteids' once. Got real human in an hour. Stebbins, you're a wonder."

The next morning everybody was up bright and early to see Schönholz off. One of Fop Smit's packets was to leave for Rotterdam at seven and Schönholz was a passenger. He could go by rail, but the boat was cheaper. No deceptions had been practised and no illusions indulged in as to the cause of his departure. He had had his supplies cut off, was flat broke and as helpless as a plant without water. They had all, at one time or another, passed through a similar

crisis and knew exactly what it meant. A purse, of course, could have been made up—Marny even insisted on sharing his last hundred francs with him—and Mynheer would have allowed the board-bill to run on indefinitely with or without an addition to his collection, but the lad was not built along those lines.

"No—I go home and help mine fader once a leetle, den maybe I come back, don't it?" was the way he put it.

The next morning, when the procession formed to escort him through the Old Gate, every man answered to his name except Joplin—he had either overslept himself or was taking an extra soak in his portable tub.

"Run, Tine, and call Mr. Joplin," cried Marny—"we'll go ahead. Tell him to come to the dock."

Away clattered the sabots up the steep stairs, and away they scurried down the bare corridor to Joplin's room. There Tine knocked. Hearing no response she pushed open the door and looked in. The room was empty! Then she noticed that the bed had not been slept in, nor had anything on the washstand been used. Stepping in softly for some explanation of the unusual occurrence—no such thing had ever happened in her experience, not unless she had been notified in advance—her eye rested on a letter ad-

dressed to Stebbins propped up in full view against a book on Joplin's table. Catching it up as offering the only explanation of his unaccountable disappearance, she raced downstairs and, crossing the cobbles on a run, laid the letter in Stebbins's hand.

"For me, Tine?"

The girl nodded, her eyes on the painter's.

The painter broke the seal and his face grew serious. Then he beckoned to Marny and read the contents aloud, the others crowding close:

DEAR STEBBINS:

Keep my things until I send for them. I take the night train for Rotterdam. Tell Schönholz I'll join him there and go on with him to Fizzenbad. Sorry to leave this way, but I could not bear to bid you all good-by. JOPLIN.

III

That night the table was one prolonged uproar. The conspirators had owned up frankly to their share of the villany, and were hard at work concocting plans for its undoing. Marny was the one man in the group that would not be pacified; nothing that either Pudfut, Stebbins or Malone had said or could say changed his mind—and the discussion, which had lasted all day, brought him no peace.

"Drove him out!—that's what you did, you bull-

headed Englishman—you and Malone and Stebbins ought to be ashamed of yourselves. If I had known what you fellows were up to I'd have pitched you all over the dike. Cost Joppy a lot of money and break up all his summer work! What did you want to guy him like that for and send him off to be scalded and squirted on in a damned Dutch——"

"But we didn't think he'd take it as hard as that."

"You didn't, didn't you! What *did* you think he'd do? Didn't you see how sensitive and nervous he was? The matter with you fellows is that Joppy is a thoroughbred and you never saw one of his kind in your life. Ever since he got here you've done nothing but jump all over him and try to rile him, and he never squawked once—came up smiling every time. He's a thoroughbred—that's what he is!"

The days that followed were burdened with a sadness the coterie could not shake off. Whatever they had laughed at and derided in Joplin they now longed for. The Bostonian may have been a nuisance in one way, but he had kept the ball of conversation rolling —had started it many times—and none of the others could fill his place. Certain of his views became respected. "As dear old Joppy used to say," was a common expression, and "By Jove, he was right!" not an uncommon opinion. In conformity with his

teachings, Marny reduced his girth measure an inch and his weight two pounds—not much for Marny, but extraordinary all the same when his appetite was considered.

Pudfut, in contrition of his offence, wrote his English friend Lord Something-or-other, who owned the yacht, and who was at Carlsbad, begging him to run up and see the "best ever" and "one of us"—and Malone never lost an opportunity to say how quick he was in repartee, or how he missed him. Stebbins kept his mouth shut.

He had started the crusade, he knew, and was personally responsible for the result. He had tried to arouse Joplin's obstinacy and had only aroused his fears. All he could do in reparation was to keep in touch with the exile and pave the way for his homecoming. If Joppy was ill, which he doubted, some of the German experts in whom the Bostonian believed would find the cause and the remedy. If he was "sound as a nut," to quote Joplin's own words, certainty of that fact, after an exhaustive examination by men he trusted, would relieve his nervous mind and make him all the happier.

The first letter came from Schönholz. Liberally translated, with the assistance of Mynheer, who spoke a little German, it conveyed the information that the Bostonian, after being put on a strict diet, had been

douched, pounded and rubbed; was then on his second week of treatment; had one more to serve; was at the moment feeling like a fighting-cock, and after a fifth week at Stückbad, in the mountains, where he was to take the after-cure, would be as strong as a three-year-old, and as frisky.

The second letter was from Joplin himself and was addressed to Stebbins. This last was authentic, and greatly relieved the situation. It read:

Nothing like a thoroughly trained expert, my dear Stebbins. These German savants fill me with wonder. The moment Dr. Stüffen fixed his eyes upon me he read my case like an open book. No nitrogenous food of any kind, was his first verdict; hot douches and complete rest packed in wet compresses, the next. I am losing flesh, of course, but it is only the "dead wood" of the body, so to speak. This Dr. Stüffen expects to replace with new shoots—predicts I will weigh forty pounds more—a charming and, to me, a most sane theory. You will be delighted also to hear that my epigastric nerve hasn't troubled me since I arrived. Love to the boys, whom I expect to see before the month is out.

JOPPY.

"Forty pounds heavier!" cried Marny from his end of the table. "He'll look like a toy balloon in knee pants. Bully for Joppy! I wouldn't let any Schweizerkäse with a hot douche get within a hundred yards of me, but then I'm not a bunch of nerves like Joppy. Anyhow, boys, we'll give the lad a welcome that will raise the roof. Joppy thin was pretty good fun, but Joppy fat will be a roaring farce."

And so it was decided, and at once all sorts and kinds of welcomes were discussed, modified, rearranged and discussed again. Pudfut suggested meeting him in Rotterdam and having a night of it. Malone thought of chartering a steam launch, hiring a band and bringing him past the towns with flags flying. Stebbins and Marny favored some demonstration nearer home, where everybody could join in.

The programme finally agreed upon included a pathway of boughs strewn with wild flowers from the steamboat landing, across the planking, over the cobbles, under the old Gate of William of Orange, and so on to the door of the inn; the appointment of Tine, dressed in a Zeeland costume belonging to her grandmother, as special envoy, to meet him with a wreath of laurel, and Johann in short clothes—also heirlooms—was to walk by his side as First Groom of the Bed Chamber.

The real Reception Committee, consisting of Mynheer in a burgomaster suit borrowed from a friend, and the four painters—Marny as a Dutch Falstaff, Pudfut as a Spanish Cavalier, Stebbins got up as a Night Watch, and Malone in the costume of a Man-at-Arms—all costumes loaned for the occasion by the antiquary in the next street—were to await Joplin's coming in the privacy of the Gate—almost a tunnel—and so close to the door of the inn

that it might have passed for a part of the establishment itself.

Meantime the four painters were to collect material for the decoration of the coffee-room—wreaths of greens over the mantel and festoons of ivy hanging down the back of Joplin's chair being prominent features; while Mynheer, Tine and Johann were to concentrate their energies in preparing a dinner the like of which had never been eaten since the sluiceways in the dikes drowned out the Spanish duke. Not a word of all this, of course, had reached the ears of the Bostonian. Half, three-quarters, if not all, the enjoyment of the occasion would be realized when they looked on Joplin's face and read his surprise.

IV

The eventful day at last arrived. Stebbins, as prearranged, had begged the exile to telegraph the exact hour of his departure and mode of travel from Rotterdam, suggesting the boat as being by far the best, and Joplin had answered in return that Fop Smit's packet, due at sundown the following day, would count him among its passengers.

The deep tones of the whistle off Papendrecht sent every man to his post, the villagers standing back in

amazement at the extraordinary spectacle, especially at Tine and Johann in their queer clothes, who, being instantly recognized, were plied with questions.

The boat slowed down; made fast; out came the gangplank; ashore went the little two-wheel carts drawn by the sleepy, tired dogs; then the baskets of onions were rolled off, and the few barrels of freight, and then two or three passengers—among them a small, feeble man, in a long coat reaching to his heels—made their way to the dock.

No Joppy!!

"That's the last man to come ashore here," said Marny. "What's become of the lad?"

"Maybe he's gone aft," cried Stebbins; "maybe——"

Here Tine gave a little scream, dropped her wreath and running toward the small, feeble man, threw her arms around his neck. Marny and the others bounded over the cobbles, tossing the bystanders out of the way as they forged ahead. When they reached Joplin he was still clinging to Tine, his sunken cheeks and hollow deep-set eyes telling only too plainly how great an effort he was making to keep on his legs. The four painters formed a close bodyguard and escorted their long-lost brother to the inn.

Mynheer, in his burgomaster suit, met the party at the door, conducted them inside and silently drew

out the chairs at the coffee-room table. He was too overcome to speak.

Joplin dropped into the one hung with ivy and rested his hands on the table.

"Lord! how good it is to get here!" he said, gazing about him, a tremble in his voice. "You don't know what I've gone through, boys."

"Why, we thought you were getting fat, Joppy," burst out Marny at last. Up to this time his voice, like that of the others, seemed to have left him, so great was his surprise and anxiety.

Joplin waved his forefinger toward Marny in a deprecatory way, as if the memory of his experience was too serious for discussion, played with his fork a moment, and said slowly:

"Will you lay it up against me, fellows, if I tell you the truth? I'm not as strong as I was and a good deal of the old fight is out of me."

"Lay up nothin'!" cried Malone. "And when it comes to fightin' ye kin count on me every——"

"Dry up!" broke in Marny. "You're way off, Malone. No, Joppy, not a man here will open his head: say the rest."

"Well, then, listen," continued the Bostonian. "I did everything they told me: got up at daylight; walked around the spring seven times; sipped the water; ate what they prescribed; lay in wet sheets

two hours every day; was kneaded by a man with a chest as hairy as a satyr's and arms like a blacksmith's; stood up and was squirted at; had everything about me looked into—even stuck needles in my arm for a sample of my blood; and at the end of three weeks was so thin that my trousers had to be lapped over in the back under a leather strap to keep them above my hips, and my coat hung down as if it were ashamed of me. Doctor Stüffen then handed me a certificate and his bill. This done he stood me up and repeated this formula—has it printed—all languages:

"'You have now thrown from your system every particle of foul tissues, Mr. ——, ah, yes—Mr. Joblin, I believe.' And he looked at the paper. 'You thought you were reasonably fat, Mr. Joblin. You were not fat, you were merely bloated. Go now to Stückbad for two weeks. There you will take the after-cure; keep strictly to the diet, a list of which I now hand you. At the expiration of that time you will be a strong man. Thank you—my secretary will send you a receipt.'

"Well, I went to Stückbad—crawled really—put up at the hotel and sent for the resident doctor, Professor Ozzenbach, Member of the Board of Pharmacy of Berlin, Specialist on Nutrition, Fellow of the

Royal Society of Bacteriologists, President of the Vienna Association of Physiological Research—that goal of man. He looked me all over and shook his head. He spoke broken English—badly.

"'Who has dreated you, may I ask, Meester Boblin?'

"'Doctor Stüffen, at Fizzenbad.'

"'Ah, yes, a fery goot man, but a leedle de times behindt. Vat did you eat?'

"I handed him the list.

"'No vonder dot you are thin, my frent—yoost as I oxpected—dis ees de olt deory of broteids. Dot is all oxbloded now. Eef you haf stay anuder mont you vould be dead. Everyting dot he has dold you vas yoost de udder way; no bread, no meelk, no vege-bubbles—noddings of dis, not von leedle bit. I vill make von leest—come to-morrow.'"

"Did you go, Joppy?" inquired Stebbins.

"*Did I go?* Yes, back to the depot and on to Cologne. That night I ate two plates of sauerkraut, a slice of pork and a piece of cheese the size of my hand; slept like a top."

"So the proteids and carbohydrates didn't do your epigastric any good, old chap," remarked Pudfut in an effort to relieve the gloom.

"Proteids, carbohydrates and my epigastric be

damned," exploded Joplin. "On your feet, boys, all of you. Here's to the food of our fathers, with every man a full plate. And here's to dear old Marny, the human kangaroo. May his appetite never fail and his paunch never shrink!"

MISS BUFFUM'S NEW BOARDER

MISS BUFFUM'S NEW BOARDER

I

He was seated near the top end of Miss Buffum's table when I first saw his good-natured face with its twinkling eyes, high cheekbones and broad, white forehead in strong contrast to the wizened, almost sour, visage of our landlady. Up to the time of his coming every one had avoided that end, or had gradually shifted his seat, gravitating slowly toward the bottom, where the bank clerk, the college professor and I hobnobbed over our soup and boiled mutton.

It was his laugh that attracted my attention—the first that had come from the upper end of the table in the memory of the oldest boarder. Men talk of the first kiss, the first baby, the first bluebird in the spring, but to me, who have suffered and know, the first, sincere, hearty laugh, untrammelled and unlimited, that rings down the hide-bound table of a dismal boarding-house, carries with it a surprise and charm that outclasses them all. The effect on this occasion was like the opening of a window letting in

a gust of pure air. Some of the more sensitive shivered at its freshness, and one woman raised her eyeglasses in astonishment, but all the rest craned their heads in the new boarder's direction, their faces expressing their enjoyment. As for Miss Buffum and the schoolmistress, they so far forgot themselves as to join audibly in the merriment.

What the secret of the man's power, or why the schoolteacher—who sat on Miss Buffum's right—should have become suddenly hilarious, or how Miss Buffum herself could be prodded or beguiled into smiles, no one at my end of the table could understand; and yet, as the days went by, it became more and more evident that not only were these two cold, brittle exteriors being slowly thawed out, but that every one else within the sound of his seductive voice was yielding to his influence. Stories that had lain quiet in our minds for months for lack of a willing or appreciative ear, or had been told behind our hands,—small pipings most of them of club and social gossip, now became public property, some being bowled along the table straight at the new boarder, who sent his own rolling back in exchange, his big, sonorous voice filling the room as he replied with accounts of his life in Poland among the peasants; of his experiences in the desert; of a shipwreck off the coast of Ceylon in which he was given up for

lost; of a trip he made across the Russian steppes in a sleigh—each adventure ending in some strangely humorous situation which put the table in a roar.

None of these narratives, however, solved the mystery of his identity or of his occupation. All our good landlady knew was that he had driven up in a hack one afternoon, bearing a short letter of introduction from a former lodger—a man who had lived abroad for the previous ten years—introducing Mr. Norvie Bing; that after its perusal she had given him the second-story front room, at that moment empty—a fact that had greatly influenced her—and that he had at once moved in. His trunks—there were two of them—had, she remembered, been covered with foreign labels (and still were)—all of which could be verified by any one who had a right to know and who would take the trouble to inspect his room when he was out, which occurred every day between ten in the morning and six in the afternoon, and more often between six in the afternoon and ten the next morning. The slight additional information she possessed came from the former lodger's letter, which stated that the bearer, Mr. Norvie Bing, was a native of Denmark, that he was visiting America for the first time, and that, desiring a place where he could live in complete retirement, the writer had recommended Miss Buffum's house.

As to who he was in his own country—and he certainly must have been some one of importance, judging from his appearance—and what the nature of his business, these things did not concern the dear lady in the least. He was courteous, treated her with marked respect, was exceedingly agreeable, and had insisted—and this she stated was the one particular thing that endeared him to her—had insisted on paying his board *a month in advance,* instead of waiting until the thirty days had elapsed. His excuse for this unheard-of idiosyncrasy was that he might some day be suddenly called away, too suddenly even to notify her of his departure, and that he did not want either his belongings or his landlady's mind disturbed during his absence.

Miss Buffum's summing up of Bing's courtesy and affability was shared by every one at my end of the table, although some of them differed as regarded his origin and occupation.

"Looks more like an Englishman than a Dane," said the bank clerk; "although I don't know any Danes. But he's a daisy, anyhow, and ought to have his salary raised for being so jolly."

"I don't agree with you," rejoined the professor. "He is unquestionably a Scandinavian—you can see that in the high cheekbones and flat nose. He is evidently studying our people with a view of writing a

book. Nothing else would persuade a man of his parts to live here. I lived in just such a place the winter I spent in Dresden. You want to get close to the people when you study their peculiarities. But whoever he is, or wherever he comes from, he is a most delightful gentleman—perfectly simple, and so sincere that it is a pleasure to hear him talk."

As for myself, I am ashamed to say that I did not agree with either the bank clerk or the professor. Although I admitted Mr. Bing's wide experience of men and affairs, and his marvellous powers of conversation, I could not divest myself of the conviction that underneath it all there lay something more than a mere desire to be either kindly or entertaining; in fact, that his geniality, though outwardly spontaneous, was really a cloak to hide another side of his nature—a fog into which he retreated—and that some day the real man would be revealed.

I made no mention of my misgivings to any of my fellow-boarders. My knowledge of men of his class —brilliant conversationalists with a world-wide experience to draw upon—was slight, and my grounds for doubting his sincerity were so devoid of proof that few persons would have considered them anything but the product of a disordered mind.

And yet I still held to my opinion.

I had caught something, I fancied, that the others

had missed. It occurred one night after he had told a story and was waiting for the laugh to subside. Soon a strange, weary expression crept over his face —the same look that comes into the face of a clown who has been hurt in a tumble and who, while wrestling with the pain, still keeps his face a-grin. Suddenly, from out of his merry, smooth-shaven face, there came a flash from his eyes so searching, so keen, so suspicious, so entirely unlike the man we knew, so foreign to his mood at the moment, that I instantly thought of the burglar peering through the painted spectacles of the family portrait while he watched his unconscious victim counting his gold.

This conviction so possessed me that I found myself for days after peering into Bing's face, watching for its repetition—so much so that the professor asked me with a laugh:

"Has Mr. Bing hypnotized you as badly as he has the ladies? They hang on his every word. Curious study of the effect of mind on matter, isn't it?"

The second time I caught the strange flash was *before* he had told his story—when his admonitory glance—his polite way of compelling attention—was sweeping the table. In its course his eyes rested for an instant on mine, kindled with suspicion, and then there flashed from their depths a light that seemed to illuminate every corner of my brain. When I

looked again his face was wreathed in smiles, his eyes sparkling with merriment. Instantly my doubts returned with redoubled force. What had he found in that instantaneous flash, I wondered? Had he read my thoughts, or had he, from his place behind the painted canvas, caught some expression on some victim's face which had roused his fears?

Then a delightful thing happened to me. I was but a young fellow trying to get a foothold in literature, who had never been out of his own country, and who spoke no tongue but his own; he was a man of the world, a traveller over the globe and speaking five languages.

"If you're not going out," he said, that same night, "come and have a smoke with me." This in his heartiest manner, laying his hand on my shoulder as he spoke. "You'll find me in my room. I've some books that may interest you, and we can continue our talk by my coal-fire. Come with me now."

We had had no special talk—none that I could remember. I recalled that I had asked him an irrelevant question after the flash had vanished, and that he had answered me in return—but no talk followed.

"I never invite any one up here," he began when we reached his room; "the place is so small——" Here he closed the door, drew up the only armchair in the room and placed me in it—"but it is large

enough for a place to crawl into and sleep—much larger, I can tell you, than I have had in many other parts of the world. I can write here, too, without interruption. What else do we want, really?—To be warm, to be fed and then to have some congenial spirits about us! I am quite happy, I assure you, with all those dear, good people downstairs. They are so kind, and they are so human, and they are all honest, each in his way, which is always refreshing to me. Most people, you know, are not honest." And he looked me over curiously.

I made no answer except to nod my assent. My eyes were wandering over the room in the endeavor to find something to confirm my suspicions—over the two trunks with their labels; over a desk littered, piled, crammed with papers; over the mantel, on which was spread a row of photographs, among them the portrait of a distinguished-looking woman with a child resting in her lap, and next to it that of a man in uniform.

"Yes—some of my friends across the sea." I had not asked him—he had read my mind. "This one you did not see—I keep it behind the others—three of them, like a little pair of steps—all I have left. The oldest is named Olga, and that little one in the middle, with the cap on her head—that is Pauline."

"Your children?"

"Yes."

"Where are they?"

"Oh, many thousand miles from here! But we won't talk about it. They are well and happy. And this one"—here he took down the photograph of the man in full uniform—"is the Grand Duke Vladimir. Yes, a soldierly-looking man—none of the others are like him. But come now, tell me of yourself—you have some one at home, too?"

I nodded my head and mentioned my mother and the others at home.

"No sweetheart yet? No?—You needn't answer—we all have sweethearts at your age—at mine it is all over. But why did you leave her? It is so hard to do that. Ah, yes, I see—to make your bread. And how do you do it?"

"I write."

He lowered his brows and looked at me under his lids.

"What sort of writing? Books? What is called a novel?"

"No—not yet. I work on special articles for the newspapers, and now and then I get a short story or an essay into one of the magazines."

He was replacing the pictures as I talked, his back to me. He turned suddenly and again sought my eye.

"Don't waste your time on essays or statistics.

You will not succeed as a machine. You have imagination, which is a real gift. You also dream, which is another way of saying that you can invent. If you can add construction to your invention, you will come quite close to what they call genius. I saw all this in your face to-night; that is why I wanted to talk to you. So many young men go astray for want of a word dropped into their minds at the right time. As for me, all I know is statistics, and so I will never be a genius." And a light laugh broke from his lips. "Worse luck, too. I must exchange them for money. Look at this—I have been all day correcting the proofs."

With this he walked to his table—he had not yet taken a seat, although a chair was next to my own—and laid in my lap a roll of galley-proofs.

"It is the new encyclopædia. I do the biographies, you see—principally of men and the different towns and countries. I have got down now to the R's—Richelieu—Rochambeau——" his fingers were now tracing the lines. "Here is Romulus, and here is Russia—I gave that half a column, and—dry work, isn't it? But I like it, for I can write here by my fire if I please, and all my other time is my own. You see they are signed 'Norvic Bing.' I insisted on that. These publishers are selfish sometimes, and want to efface a writer's personality, but I would not

permit it, and so finally they gave in. But no more of that—one must eat, and to eat one must work, so why quarrel with the spade or the ground? See that you raise good crops—that is the best of all."

Then he branched off into a description of a ball he had attended some years before at the Tuileries—of the splendor of the interior; the rich costumes of the women; the blaze of decorations worn by the men; the graciousness of the Empress and the charm of her beauty—then of a visit he had made to the Exile a few months after he had reached Chiselhurst. Throwing up his hands he said: "A feeble old man with hollow eyes and a cracked voice. Oh, such a pity! For he was royal—although all Europe laughed."

When the time came for me to go—it was near midnight, to my astonishment—he followed me to the door, bidding me good-night with both hands over mine, saying I should come again when he was at leisure, as he had been that night—which I promised to do, adding my thanks for what I declared was the most delightful evening I had ever spent in my life.

And it had been—and with it there had oozed out of my mind every drop of my former suspicion. There *was* another side that he was hiding from us, but it was the side of tenderness for his children—for those he loved and from whom he was parted.

I had boasted to myself of my intuition and had looked, as I supposed, deep into his heart, and all I found were three little faces. With this came a certain feeling of shame that I had been stupid enough to allow my imagination to run away with my judgment. Hereafter I would have more sense.

All that winter Bing was the life of the house. The days on which his seat was empty—off getting statistics for the encyclopædia, I explained to my fellow-boarders, I being looked upon now as having special information owing to my supposed intimacy, although I had never entered his room since that night—on these days, I say, the table relapsed into its old-time dullness.

One night I found his card on my pin-cushion. I always locked my door myself when I left my room—had done so that night, I thought, but I must have forgotten it. Under his name was written: "Say good-by to the others."

I concluded, of course, that it was but for a few days and that he would return as usual, and hold out his two big generous hands to each one down the table, leaving a warmth behind him which they had not known since he last pressed their palms—and so on down until he reached Miss Buffum and the schoolteacher, who would both rise in their seats to welcome him.

With the passing of the first week the good lady became uneasy; the board, as usual, had been paid in advance, but it was the man she missed. No one else could add the drop of oil to the machinery of the house, nor would it run smoothly without him.

At the end of the second week she rapped at my door and with trembling steps led me to Bing's room. She had opened it with her own pass-key—a liberty she never allowed any one to take except herself, and never then unless some emergency arose. It was empty of everything that belonged to him—had been for days. The room had been set in order and the bed had been made up by the maid the day he left and had not been slept in since. Trunks, books, manuscripts, photographs—all were gone—not a vestige of anything belonging to him was visible.

I stooped down and examined the grate. On the top of the dead coals lay a little heap of ashes—all that was left of a package of letters.

II

Five years passed. Times had changed with me. I had long since left my humble quarters at Miss Buffum's and now had two rooms in an uptown apartment-house. My field of work, too, had become en-

larged. I had ceased to write for the Sunday papers and was employed on special articles for the magazines. This had widened my acquaintance with men and with life. Heretofore I had known the dark alleys and slums, the inside of station-houses, bringing me in contact with the police and with some of the detectives, among them Alcorn of the Central Office, a man who had sought me out of his own accord. Many of these trusted me and from them I gathered much of my material. Now I explored other fields. With the backing of the editor I often claimed seats at the opening of important conventions—not so much political as social and scientific; so, too, at many of the public dinners given to our own and distinguished foreign guests, would a seat be reserved for me, my object being the study of men when they were off their guard—reading their minds, finding out the man behind the mask, a habit I had never yet thrown off. Most men have some mental fad—this was mine. Sometimes my articles found an echo in a note written to me by the guests themselves; this would fill me with joy. Often I was criticised for the absurdity of my views.

On this occasion a great banquet was to be given to Prince Polinski, a nephew of the Czar and possible heir to the throne. The press had been filled with the detail of his daily life—of the dinners, teas and func-

tions given by society in his honor; of his reception by the mayor, of his audience at the White House; of the men who guarded his person; of his "opinions," "impressions" and "views" on this, that and the other thing, but so far no one had dissected the man himself.

What our editor wanted was a minute analysis of the mind of a young Russian studied at close range. The occasion of the banquet was selected because I could then examine him at my leisure. The results were to be used by the editor in an article of his own, my memoranda being only so much padding.

When I entered and took up a position near the door where I could look him over, Delmonico's largest reception-room was crowded with guests: bankers, railroad presidents, politicians, officers of the army and navy, judges, doctors, and the usual collection of white shirt-fronts that fill the seats at a public dinner of this kind. The Prince was in the uniform of an officer of the Imperial Navy. He was heavily built and tall, with a swarthy face enlivened by a pointed mustache. The Russian Ambassador at his side was in full dress and wore a number of decorations: these two needed no pointing out. Some of the others were less distinguishable—among them a heavily-built man in evening-dress, with a full beard and

mustache which covered his face almost to his eyes—soft and bushy as the hair on a Spitz dog and as black. With a leather apron and a broad-axe he would have passed at a masquerade for an executioner of the olden time. Despite this big beard, there was a certain bearing about the man—a certain elegance both of manner and gesture—talking with his hands, accentuating his sentences with outstretched fingers, lifting his shoulders in a shrug (I saw all this from across the room where I stood)—that showed clearly not only his high position, but his breeding. What position he held under the Prince I was, of course, unaware, but it must have been very close, for the big Russian kept him constantly at the royal side. I noted, too, that the Prince was careful to introduce him to many who were brought up to shake his hand.

When the procession was formed to march into the dining-hall, Polinski came first on the arm of the mayor; then followed a group of dignitaries, including the Ambassadors, the black-bearded man walking by the side of the Prince, who would now and then turn and address him.

My seat was against the wall opposite the dais, and knowing that I should have scant opportunity to study the Prince's face from where I sat, I edged my way along the side of the corridor, the crowd

making progress difficult for him, but easy for me, as I crept close to the wall. When I reached the door opening into the banquet hall I took up a position just inside the jamb, so that I could get a full view of the Prince as he passed.

At this instant I became aware that a pair of broad shoulders were touching mine. Turning quickly, I found myself looking into the face of the bearded Russian. His eyes were fastened on mine, an inquiring, rather surprised look on his face, as if he was wondering at the bad manners of a man who would thrust himself ahead of a royal personage. For an instant the features were calm and impassive, then as he continued to look at me there flashed out of his eyes a search-light glance that shot straight through me.

It was Bing!

Bearded like a Cossack; more heavily built, solemn, dignified, elegant in carriage and demeanor, with not a trace of jollity about him—but Bing all the same! I could have sworn to it!

The flash burned for an instant; the eyes behind the canvas dodged back, then with a graceful wave of the hand he turned to the Ambassador who was now abreast of him and said in a voice so low that I caught the words but not the full tone:

"Isn't it a charming sight, your Excellency? There is nothing like the hospitality of these wonder-

ful Americans." And the two passed into the brilliantly-lighted hall.

I made my way to my seat and sat thinking it over. That he had recognized me was without question; that he had ignored me was equally true—why, I could not tell.

For years I had made him one of my heroes. He had stood for cheerfulness, for contentment with one's lot, for consideration for another—and always a weaker brother. When his abrupt departure had been criticised by my fellow-boarders, I had stemmed the tide against him, dilating on his love for his children, on his loneliness away from them; on his simplicity, his common-sense, his desire to help even a young fellow like me who had no claim upon him. In return he had seen fit to treat me with contempt —I who would have been so proud to tell him how his advice had helped me and what progress I had made by following it.

The incident took such hold upon me that I found myself dissecting his mentality instead of that of the Great Personage in the public eye. As I analyzed my feelings I found that he had hurt my heart more than my pride. I would have been so glad to shake his hand—so glad to rejoice with him over his changed conditions—once the occupant of a front room in a cheap boarding-house, supporting

himself by filling space in the columns of an encyclopædia, and now the bosom friend of Princes and Ambassadors!

Then a doubt arose in my mind. *Was* it Bing? Had I not made a mistake? How could a smooth-shaven Dane with blond hair transform himself into a swarthy Russian with the beard of a Cossack? There was, it is true, no change in the eyes or in the round head—in the whiteness and width of the forehead, or the breadth of the shoulders. All these I went over one by one as I watched him every now and then lean across the table and speak to some of the distinguished guests that surrounded him. The thing which puzzled me was his grave, sedate demeanor, dignified, almost austere at times. A man, I thought, might grow a beard and dye it, but how could he grow a different set of manners, how smother his jollity, how wipe out his spontaneous buoyancy?

No, it was not Bing! It was only my stupid self. I was always ready to find the mysterious and unnatural. I turned to the guest next me.

"Do you know who that man is on the dais," I asked; "the one all black and white, with the big beard?"

"Yes, one of the Prince's suite; some jaw-breaking name with an '-usski' on the end of it. He

brought him with him; looks like a bull pup chewing a muff, doesn't he?"

I smiled at the comparison, but I was still in doubt.

When the banquet broke up I hurried out ahead of the others and posted myself at the top of the staircase leading down to the side door of the street. The Prince's carriage—an ordinary cab—was ordered to this door to escape the crowd and to avoid any delay. This I learned from my old friend Alcorn of the Central Office, who was in charge of the detectives at the dinner, and who in answer to my request said:

"Certainly I'll let you through. Come alone, and don't speak to me as you go by. I'll say you're one of us. The crowd thinks he's going out by the other door, and you can get pretty close to him."

The Prince came first, wrapped in furs—the black-bearded Russian at his side in overcoat, silk hat and white gloves. The Ambassador and the others had bidden them good-night at the top of the staircase.

Under Alcorn's direction I had placed myself just inside the street door where I could slip out behind the Prince and his black-bearded companion. As a last resort I determined to walk straight up to him and say: "You haven't forgotten me, Mr. Bing, have you?" If I had changed so as to need proof of my identity Alcorn would furnish it. Whatever his answer, his voice would solve my mystery.

He walked down the stairs with an easy, swinging movement, keeping a little behind the Prince; waited until Alcorn had opened the street door and with a nod of thanks followed Polinski out into the night. Once outside I shrank back into the shadow of the doorway and held my breath to catch his first spoken word—to the coachman—to the Prince—to any one who came in his way.

At this moment a man in a slouch hat and poorly dressed, a light cane under his arm, evidently a tramp, hurried across the street to hold the cab door. I edged nearer, straining my ears.

The Prince bent his head and stooped to enter the cab. The tramp leaned forward, shot up his right arm; there came a flash of steel, and the next instant the tramp lay writhing on the sidewalk, one hand twisted under his back, the other held in the viselike grip of the black-bearded man. Alcorn rushed past me, threw himself on the prostrate tramp, slipped a pair of handcuffs over his wrists, dragged him to his feet, and with one hand on his throat backed him into the shadow of the side door.

The Prince smiled and stepped into his carriage. The black-bearded man dusted his white gloves one on the other, gave an order in a low tone to the coachman, took his place beside his companion and the two drove off.

I stood out in the rain and tried to pull myself together. The rapidity of the attack; the poise and strength of the black-bearded Russian; the quickness with which Alcorn had risen to the occasion; the absence of all outcry or noise of any kind—no one but ourselves witnessing the occurrence—had taken my breath away. That an attack had been made on the life of the Prince, and that it had been frustrated by his friend, was evident. It was also evident that accosting a Prince on the sidewalk at night without previous acquaintance was a dangerous experiment. When I recovered my wits both Alcorn and the would-be assassin had disappeared. So had the cab.

Only two morning journals had an account of the affair; one dismissed it with a fling at the police for not protecting our guests from annoyance, and the other stated that a drunken tramp had demanded the price of a night's lodging from the Prince as he was leaving Delmonico's, and that a member of the Prince's suite had held the fellow until a policeman came along and took him to the station-house. Not a word of the murderous lunge, the flash of steel, the viselike grip of the black-bearded man or the click of the handcuffs.

That night I found Alcorn.

"Did that fellow try to stab the Prince?" I asked.

"Yes."

The Prince smiled and stepped into his carriage.

"With a knife?"

"No, a sword cane."

"The papers didn't say so."

"No, I didn't intend they should. Wouldn't have been pleasant reading for his folks in St. Petersburg. Besides, we haven't rounded up his gang yet."

"The Prince didn't seem to lose his nerve?" I asked.

"No, he isn't built that way."

"You know him, then?"

"Yes—been with him every day since he arrived."

"Who is the black-bearded man with him?"

"He is his intimate friend, Count Lovusski. Been all over the world together."

"Is Lovusski his *only* name?" This seemed to be my chance.

Alcorn turned quickly and looked into my face.

"On the dead quiet, is it?"

"Yes, Alcorn, you can trust me."

"No—he's got half a dozen of 'em. In Paris in '70 he was Baron Germunde with estates in Hungary. Lived like a fighting-cock; knew everybody at the Palace and everybody knew him—stayed there all through the Franco-Prussian War. In London in '75 he was plain Mr. Loring, trying to raise money for a mine somewhere in Portugal—knew nobody but stockbrokers and bank presidents. In New York

five years ago he was Mr. Norvic Bing, and worked on some kind of a dictionary; lived in a boarding-house on Union Square."

I could not conceal my delight.

"I knew I was right!" I cried, laying my hand on his arm. "I lived with him there a whole winter."

"Yes, he told me so. That's why I am telling you the rest of it." Alcorn was smiling, a curious expression lighting his face.

"And how came he to be such a friend of the Prince's?" I asked.

"He isn't his friend—isn't anybody's friend. He's a special agent of the Russian Secret Service."

CAPTAIN JOE AND THE *SUSIE ANN*

CAPTAIN JOE AND THE *SUSIE ANN*

Wide of beam, stout of mast, short-bowspritted, her boom clewed up to clear her deck load of rough stone; drawing ten feet aft and nine feet for'ard; a twelve-horse hoisting engine and boiler in her forecastle; at the tiller a wabbly-jointed, halibut-shaped, moon-faced (partially eclipsed, owing to a fringe of dark whiskers), sleepy-eyed skipper named Baxter,—such was the sloop *Susie Ann,* and her outfit and her commander, as she lay alongside the dock in New London Harbor, ready to discharge her cargo at the site of Shark Ledge Lighthouse, eight miles seaward.

On the dock itself, over a wharf post sprawled her owner, old Abram Marrows, a thin, long, badly put together man, awkward as a stepladder and as rickety, who, after trying everything from farming to selling a patent churn, had at last become a shipowner, the *Susie Ann* comprising his entire fleet. Marrows had come to see her off; this being the sloop's first trip for the season.

Lying outside the *Susie Ann*—her lines fast to an off-shore spile, was the construction tug of the

lighthouse gang, the deck strewn with diving gear, water casks and the like,—all needed in the furthering of the work at the ledge. On the tug's forward deck, hat off and jacket swinging loose, stood Captain Joe Bell in charge of the submarine work at the site, glorious old Captain Joe, with the body of a capstan, legs stiff as wharf posts, arms and hands tough as cant hooks and heart twice as big as all of them put together.

Each and every piece of stone,—some of them weighed seven tons,—stowed aboard the *Susie Ann,* was, when she arrived alongside the foundation of the lighthouse, to be lowered over her side and sent down to Captain Joe to place in thirty feet of water. This fact made him particular both as to the kind of vessel engaged and the ability of the skipper. Bad seamanship might not only endanger the security of the work but his own life as well,—a diver not being as quick as a crab or blackfish in getting from under a seven-ton stone dropped from tripdogs at the signal to "lower away."

Captain Joe's inspection of the *Susie Ann's* skipper was anything but satisfactory, judging from the way he opened his battery of protest.

"Baxter ain't fittin', I tell ye, Abram Marrows," he exploded. "He ain't fittin' and never will be. Baxter don't know most nothin'. Set him to grubbin'

clams, Abram, but don't let him fool 'round the Ledge. He'll git the sloop ashore, I tell ye, or drop a stone and hurt somebody. Go and git a *man* som'ers and put him in charge,—not a half-baked—" here he lowered his muzzle and fired point-blank at the object of his wrath,—" Yes, and I'll say it to your face, Captain Baxter. You take my advice and lay off for this v'yage,—it ain't no picnic out to the Ledge. You ain't seen it since we got the stone 'bove high water. Reg'lar mill tail! You go ashore, I tell ye,—or ye'll lose the sloop."

Many of the men ranged along the top of the cabin of the tug, or perched on its rail, wondered at the vehemence of the captain's attack, " Moon-faced Baxter," as he was called, having a fair reputation as a seaman. They knew, too, that Captain Joe was aware of the condition of Marrows's affairs, for it had been common talk that the bank had loaned Abram several hundred dollars with the sloop as security on the captain's own personal inspection. Some of them had even been present when Mrs. Marrows,—a faded old woman with bleached eyes and a pursed-up mouth, her shawl hooding her head and pinned close under her chin with her thumb and forefinger,—had begged Captain Joe to try the *Susie Ann* for a few loads until Abram could " ketch up," and had heard his promise to help her.

But they made no protest. Such outbursts on the captain's part were but the escaping steam from the overcharged boiler of his indignation. Underneath lay the firebox of his heart, chock full of red-hot coals glowing with sympathy for every soul who needed his help. If his safety valve let go once in a while it was to escape from greater danger.

His long range ammunition exhausted, Captain Joe turned on his heel and walked aft to where his diving gear was piled, venting his indignation at every step. This time the outburst was directed to me,—(it was my weekly inspection at the Ledge).

"Can't jam nothin' into his head, sir. Stubbornest mule 'round this harbor. Warn't for that wife o' his Abe Marrows would a-been high and dry long ago. Every time he gits something purty good he goes and fools it away;—sold his farm and bought that sloop; then he clapped a plaster on it in the bank to start a cook shop. But the wife's all right;—only last week she come to me lookin' like she'd bu'st out cryin',—sayin' the sloop was all they had, and I promised her then I'd use the *Susie,* but she never said nothin' 'bout Baxter being in charge, or I'd stopped him 'fore he loaded her. Well, there ain't no tellin' what nat'ral born fools like Abe Marrows 'll do, but it's something ornery and criss-cross if Abe Marrows does it. That woman's worked her fingers

off for him, but he'll git her in the poor-house yit,—see if he don't."

Marrows had heard every word of Captain Joe's outburst, but he made no answer except to lift his thin elbows and spread his fingers in a deprecatory way, as if in protest. Baxter maintained a dogged silence;—the least said in answer the better. Captain Joe Bell was not a man either to contradict or oppose;—better let him blow it all out. Both owner and skipper determined to take the risk. The *Susie Ann* had been laid up all winter awaiting the opening of the spring work, and the successful carrying out of the present venture was Marrows's only escape from financial ruin, and Baxter's only chance of getting his back wages. There was an unpaid bill, too, for caulking, then a year old, lying in Abram's bureau drawer, together with an account at Mike Lavin's machine shop for a new set of grate bars, now almost worn out. Worse than all the bank's lien on the sloop was due in a few weeks. What money the sloop earned, therefore, must be earned quickly.

And then again, Abram ruminated, Shark Ledge wasn't the worst place on the coast,—despite Captain Joe's warning,—especially on this particular morning, when a light wind was blowing off shore. Plenty of other sloops had delivered stone over their rails to the divers below. Marrows remembered that he

had been out to the Ledge himself when the *Screamer* came up into the wind and crawled slowly up until her forefoot was within a biscuit toss of the stone pile.

What Marrows forgot was that Captain Bob Brandt of Cape Ann had then held the spokes of the *Screamer's* wheel,—a man who knew every twist and turn of the treacherous tide.

So Baxter shook out the sloop's jib and mainsail and started on his journey eight miles seaward, with orders to make fast on arrival to the spar buoy which lay within a few hundred yards of the Ledge, and there wait until the tide turned, when she could drop into position to unload. The tug with all of us on board would follow when we had taken on fresh water and coal.

On the run out Captain Joe watched the sloop until she had made her first tack, then he turned to his work and again busied himself in overhauling his diving dress; tightening the set-screws in his copper collar, re-cording his breastplate and putting new leather thongs in his leaden shoes. There was some stone on the sloop's deck which was needed to complete a level down among the black fish and tom cod,—twenty-two feet down,—where the sea kelp streamed up in long blades above the top of his helmet

and the rock crabs scurried out of his way. If Baxter didn't make a "tarnel fool of himself and git into one o' them swirl-holes," he intended to get these stones into place before night.

He knew these "holes," as he did every other swirl around the ledge and what they could do and what they couldn't. They were his swirls, really,—for he had placed every individual fragment of the obstructions that caused them with his own hands, in thirty feet of water.

Some three years before the site had been marked by a spindle bearing an iron cage and fastened to a huge boulder known as Shark Ledge Rock, and covered at low water. The unloading of various sloops and schooners under his orders had enlarged this submerged rock to a miniature island, its ragged crest thrust above the sea. This obstruction to the will of the wind and tide, and the ever-present six-mile current, caused by the narrowing of Long Island Sound in its onrush to the sea, acted as a fallen log that blocks a mountain stream, or a boulder that plugs a torrent. That which for centuries had been a steady "set" every six hours east and west, had now become a "back-and-in suck" fringed by a series of swirling undercurrents dealing death and destruction to the ignorant and unwary.

Not been long since a schooner loaded with con-

crete had been saved from destruction by the merest chance, and later on a big scow caught in the swirl had parted her buoy lines and would have landed high and dry on the stone pile had not Captain Joe run a hawser to her, twisted its bight around the drum of his engine and warped her off just in time to save her bones from sea worms.

As the tug approached, the Ledge, looming up on the dim horizon line, looked like a huge whale spouting derricks, a barnacle of a shanty clinging to its back. Soon there rose into relief the little knot of men gathered about one of the whale's fins—our landing stage,—and then, as we came alongside, the welcome curl of the smoke, telling of fried pork and saleratus biscuit.

Captain Joe's orders now came thick and fast.

"Hurry dinner, Nichols,"—this to the shanty cook, who was leaning out of the galley window,—"And here,—three or four o' ye, git this divin' stuff ashore, and then all hands to dinner. The wind's ag'in Baxter,—he won't git here for an hour. Startin' on one o' them long legs o' his'n now,"—and the captain's eye rested on the sloop beating up Fisher's Island way.

"And, Billy,—'fore ye go ashore, jump into the yawl and take a look at that snatch block on the spar buoy,—that clam digger may want it 'fore night."

This spar buoy lay a few hundred yards off the Whale's Snout. Loaded vessels were moored to this quill bob, held in place by a five-ton sinker, until they were ready to drop into the eddy and there discharge their stone.

Dinner over the men fell to work, each to his job. The derrick gang was set to shifting a boom on to the larger derrick, the concrete mixers picked up their shovels, and I went to work on the pay-roll of the week. This I always figured up in the little dry-goods box of a room opening out of the galley in the end of our board shanty, its window looking toward Montauk.

As I leaned my arms on the sill for a glimpse of the wide expanse of blue and silver, the cotton rag that served as a curtain flapped in my face. I pushed it aside and craned my neck north and south. The curtain had acted as a weather vane,—the wind had hauled to the east.

The sky, too, had dulled. Little lumpy clouds showed near the horizon line, and, sailing above these, hung a dirt spot of vapor, while aloft glowed some prismatic sundogs, shimmering like opals. Etched against the distance, with a tether line fastened to the spar buoy, lay the *Susie Ann*. She had that moment arrived and had made fast. Her sails were furled, her boom swinging loose and ready, the smoke from

her hoister curling from the end of her smoke pipe thrust up out of the forward hatch.

Then I looked closer in.

Below me, on the concrete platform, rested our big air pump, and beside it stood Captain Joe. He had slipped into his diving dress and was at the moment adjusting the breastplates of lead, weighing twenty-five pounds each, to his chest and back. His leaden shoes were already on his feet. With the exception of his copper helmet, the signal line around his wrist, and the life line about his waist, he was ready to go under water.

Pretty soon he would don his helmet, and, with a last word to Jimmy, his tender, would tuck his chin whisker inside the round opening, wait until the face plate was screwed on, and then, with a cheerful nod behind the glass, denoting that his air was coming all right, would step down his rude ladder into the sea,—down,—down,—down to his place among the crabs and the seaweed.

Suddenly my ears became conscious of a conversation carried on in a low tone around the corner of the shanty.

"Old Moon-face'll have to git up and git in a minute," said a derrick man to a shoveller,—born sailors, these,—"there'll be a red-hot time 'round here 'fore night."

"Well, there ain't no wind."

"Ain't no wind,—ain't there? See that bobble waltzin' in?"

I looked seaward, and my eyes rested on a ragged line of silver edging the horizon toward Montauk.

"Does look soapy, don't it?" answered the shoveller. "Wonder if Cap'n Joe sees it."

Cap'n Joe had seen it—fifteen minutes ahead of anybody else,—had been watching it to the exclusion of any other object. He knew the sea,—knew every move of the merciless, cunning beast; had watched it many a time, lying in wait for its chance to tear and strangle. More than once had he held on to the rigging when, with a lash of its tail, it had swept a deck clean, or had stuck to the pumps for days while it sucked through opening seams the life-blood of his helpless craft. The game here would be to lift its victim on the back of a smooth under-roller and with mighty effort hurl it like a battering ram against the shore rocks, shattering its timbers into drift wood.

"Billy," said Captain Joe to the shoveller, "go down to the edge of the stone pile and holler to the sloop to cast off and make for home. Hurry, now! And, Jimmy,"—this to his pump tender,—"unhook this breastplate,—there won't be no divin', today.

I've been mistrustin' the wind would haul ever since I got up this mornin'."

The shoveller sprang from the platform and began clambering over the slippery, slimy rocks like a crab, his red shirt marked with the white "X" of his suspenders in relief against the blue water. When he reached the outermost edge of the stone pile, where the ten-ton blocks lay, he made a megaphone of his fingers and repeated the captain's orders to the *Susie Ann*.

Baxter listened with his hands cupped to his ears.

"Who says so?" came back the reply.

"Cap'n Joe."

"What fur?"

"Goin' to blow,—don't ye see it?"

Baxter stepped gingerly along the sloop's rail. Obeying the order meant twenty-four hour's delay in making sure of his wages,—perhaps a week, spring weather being uncertain. He didn't "see no blow." Besides, if there was one coming, it wasn't his sloop or his stone. When he reached the foot of the bowsprit Moon-face sent this answer over the water:

"Let her blow and be d——! This sloop's chartered to deliver this stone. We've got steam up and the stuff's goin' over outside. Get your divers ready. I ain't shovin' no baby carriage and don't you forgit

it. I'm comin' on! Cast off that buoy line, you,"—this to one of his men.

Captain Joe continued stripping off his leaden breastplate. He had heard his order repeated and knew that it had been given correctly,—Baxter's subsequent proceedings did not interest him. If he had anything to say in answer it was of no moment to him. His word was law on the Ledge; first, because the men daily trusted their lives to his guidance, and, second, because they all loved him with a love hard for a landsman to understand, especially today, when the boss and the gang never, by any possibility, pull together.

"Baxter says he's comin' on, sir," said Billy, when he reached the captain's side, the grin on his sunburnt face widening until its two ends hooked over his ears. Billy had heard nothing so funny for weeks.

"Comin' on?"

"That's what he hollered. Wants you to git ready to take his stuff, sir."

I was out of the shanty now. I came in two jumps. With that squall rushing from the eastward and the tide making flood, any man who would leave the protection of the spar buoy for the purpose of unloading was fit for a lunatic asylum.

Captain Joe had straightened up and was screening his eyes with his hand when I reached his side,

his gaze rivetted on the loosened sloop, which had now hauled in her tether line and was drifting clear of the buoy. The captain was still incredulous.

"No, he ain't comin'," he said to me. "He's all right,—he'll port his helm in a minute,—but he'd better send up his jib"—and he swept his eye around,—"and that quick, too."

At this instant the sloop wavered and lurched heavily. The outer edge of the insuck had caught her bow.

Men's minds work quickly in times of great danger,—minds like Captain Joe's. In a flash he had taken in the fast-approaching roller, froth-capped by the sudden squall; the surging vessel and the scared face of Baxter, who, having realized his mistake was now clutching wildly at the tiller and shouting orders to his men, none of which could be carried out. Captain Joe knew what would happen,—what had happened before, and what would happen again with fools like Baxter,—now,—in a minute,—before he could reach the edge of the stone pile, hampered as he was in a rubber suit that bound his arms and tied his great legs together. And he understood too the sea's game, and that the only way to outwit it would be to use the beast's own tactics. When it gathered itself for the thrust and started in to hurl the doomed vessel the full length of its mighty arms,

the sloop's only safety lay in widening the space. A cushion of backwater would then receive the sloop's forefoot in place of the snarling teeth of low crunching rocks.

He had kicked off both shoes by this time and was shouting out directions to Baxter, who was slowly and surely being sucked into the swirl:—

"Up with your jib! No,—*no!* Let that mainsail alone! UP! Do ye want to git her on the stone pile, you? Port your helm! *Port!* O GOD!—Look at him!!"

Captain Joe had slid from the platform now and was flopping his great body over the slimy, slippery rocks like a seal, falling into water holes every other step, crawling out on his belly, rolling from one slanting stone to another, shouting to his men, every time he had the breath:—

"Man that yawl and run a line as quick as God'll let ye—out to the buoy! Do ye hear? Pull that fall off the drum of the h'ister and git the end of a line on it! She'll be on top of us in a minute and the mast out of her! *Quick!*"

Jimmy sprang for a coil of rope; Billy and the others threw themselves after him; while half a dozen men working around the small eddy in the lee of the diminutive island caught up the oars and made a dash for the yawl.

All this time the sloop, under the uplift of the first big Montauk roller,—the skirmish line of the attack,—surged, bow on, to destruction. Baxter, although shaking with fear, had sense enough left to keep her nose pointed to the stone pile. The mast might come out of her, but that was better than being gashed amidships and sunk in thirty feet of water.

Captain Joe, his rubber suit wet and glistening as a shiny porpoise, his hair matted to his head, had now reached the outermost rock opposite the doomed craft, and stood near enough to catch every expression that crossed Baxter's face, who, white as chalk, was holding the tiller with all his strength, cap off, his blousy hair flying in the increasing gale, his mouth tight shut. Go ashore she must. It would be every man for himself then. No help would come,—no help *could* come. Captain Joe and his men would run for shelter as soon as the blow fell, and leave them to their fate. Men like Baxter are built to think this way.

All these minutes—seconds, really,—Captain Joe stood bending forward, watching where the sloop would strike, his hands outstretched in the attitude of a ball-player awaiting a ball. If her nose should hit the sharp, square edges of one of the ten-ton blocks, God help her! She would split wide open like a melon. If by any chance her forefoot should

be thrust into one of the many gaps between the enrockment blocks,—spaces from two to three feet wide,—and her bow timbers thus take the shock, there was a living chance to save her.

A cry from Baxter, who had dropped the tiller and was scrambling over the stone-covered deck to the bowsprit, reached the captain's ears, but he never altered his position. What he was to do must be done surely. Baxter didn't count,—wasn't in the back of his head. There were plenty of willing hands to pick up Baxter and his men.

Then a thing happened which, if I had not seen it, I would never have believed possible. The water cushion of the outsuck helped,—so did the huge roller which, in its blind rage, had underestimated the distance between its lift and the wide-open jaws of the rock,—as a maddened bull often underestimates the length of its thrust, its horns falling short of the matador.

Whatever the cause, Captain Joe watched his chance, sprang to the outermost rock, and, bracing his great snubbing posts of legs against its edge, reversed his body, caught the wavering sloop on his broad shoulders, close under her bowsprit chains, and pushed back with all his might.

Then began a struggle between the strength of the man and the lunge of the sea. With every succeeding

onslaught, and before the savage roller could fully lift the staggering craft to hurl her to destruction, Captain Joe, with the help of the outsuck, would shove her back from the waiting rocks. This was repeated again and again,—the men in the rescuing yawl meanwhile bending every muscle to carry out the captain's commands.

Sometimes his head was free enough to shout his orders, and sometimes both man and bow were smothered in suds.

"Keep that fall clear!" would come his order "Stand ready to catch the yawl! Shut that—" here a souse would stop his breath,—"shut that furnace door! Do ye want the steam out of the b'iler?"—etc., etc.

That the slightest misstep on the slimy rocks on which his feet were braced meant sending him under the sloop's bow where he would be caught between her forefoot and the rocks and ground into pulp concerned him as little as did the fact that Baxter and his men had crawled along the bowsprit over his head and had dropped to the island without wetting their shoes. That his diving suit was full of water and he soaking wet to the skin, made not the slightest difference to him—no more than it would to a Newfoundland dog saving a child. His thoughts were on other things,—on the rescuing yawl speeding toward the

The slightest misstep on the slimy rocks meant sending him under the sloop's bow.

spar buoy, on the stout hands and knowing ones who were pulling for all they were worth to that anchor of safety;—on two of his own men who, seeing Baxter's cowardly desertion, had sprung like cats at the bowsprit of the sloop in one of her dives, and were then on the stern ready to pay out a line to the yawl when she reached the goal. No,—he'd hold on "till hell froze over."

A hawser now ripped itself clear from out the crest of a roller. This meant that the two cats, despite the increasing gale and thrash of the onrushing sea had succeeded in paying out a stern line to the men in the yawl, who had slipped it through the snatch block fastened in the buoy. It meant, too, that this line had been connected with the line they had brought with them from the island, its far end being around the drum of our hoister.

A shrill cry now came from one of the crew in the yawl alongside the spar buoy, followed instantly by the clear, ringing order, "GO AHEAD!"

Now a burst of feathery steam plumed skyward, and then the slow "chuggity-chug" of our drum cogs rose in the air. The stern line straightened until it was as rigid as a bar of iron, sagged for an instant under the slump of the staggering sloop, straightened again, and remained rigid. The sloop, held by the stern line, crept slowly back to safety.

Captain Joe looked over his shoulder, noted the widening distance, and leaped back to the inshore rocks.

Late that afternoon, when the tug, with Captain Joe and me on board, reached the tug's moorings in New London harbor, the dock was crowded with anxious faces,—Abram Marrows and his wife among them. It had been an anxious day along the shore road. The squall, which had blown for half an hour and had then slunk away toward Little Gull, grumbling as it went, had sent everything that could seek shelter bowling into New London Harbor under close reefs. It had also started Marrows and his wife on a run to the dock, where they had stood for hours straining their eyes seaward, each incoming vessel, as she swooped past the dock into the inner basin, adding to their anxiety.

"Wouldn't give a keg o' sp'ilt fish for her. Ain't a livin' chance o' savin' her," had bellowed the captain of a fishing smack, as he swept by, within biscuit-toss of the dock, his boom submerged, the water curling over the rail.

"She went slap ag'in them chunks o' cut stone!" shouted the mate of a tug through the window of a pilot house.

"Got her off with her bow split open, but they

can't keep her free! Sunk by now, I guess," had yelled one of the crew of a dory making for the shipyard.

As each bulletin was shouted back over the water in answer to the anxious inquiries of Marrows, the wife would clasp her fingers the tighter. She made no moan or outburst. Abram would blame her and say it was her fault,—everything was her fault that went wrong.

When the tug had made fast to a wharf spile Captain Joe cleared the stringpiece, and walked straight to Marrows. He was still soaking wet underneath his clothes, only his outer garments being dry,—a condition which never affected him in the least, "salt water bein' healthy," he would say.

"What did I tell ye, Abram Marrows?" he exploded, in a voice that could be heard to the turnpike. "Didn't I say Baxter warn't fittin', and that he ought ter be grubbin' clams? Go and dig a hole some'er's and cover him up head and ears,—and dig it quick, too, and I'll lend ye a shovel."

"Well, but, Captain Joe,"—protested Marrows.

"Don't you 'well' me. Well, nothin'. You're bad as him. Go and dig a hole and *both* on ye git in it!"—and he pushed through the crowd on his way to his house, I close at his heels.

The wife, who but that moment had heard the glad

news of the rescue from the lips of a deck hand, now hurried after the captain and laid her hand on his arm. Her eyes were red from weeping; strands of gray hair strayed over her forehead and cheeks; her lips were tightly drawn; the anxiety of the last few hours had left its mark.

"Don't go, Captain Joe, till I kin speak to ye," she pleaded, in a trembling voice,—speaking through fingers pressed close to her lips.

"No,—I don't want to hear nothin'. She's all right, I tell ye,—tighter 'n a drum and not a drop of water in her. Got some of my men aboard and we'll unload her to-morrow. You go home, old woman; you needn't worry."

"Yes, but you must listen,—*please* listen."

She had followed him up the dock and the two stood apart from the crowd.

"Well, what is it?"

"I want to thank ye,—and I want——"

"No, you don't want to thank nothin'. She's all right, I tell ye."

She had tight hold of his arm now and was looking up into his face, all her gratitude in her eyes.

"But I do,—I must,—please listen. You've helped us so. It's all we have. If we'd lost the sloop I'd 'a' give up."

The captain's rough, hard hand went out and caught the woman's thin fingers. A peculiar cadence came into his voice.

"All ye have? Do you think I don't know it? That's why I was under her bowsprit."

"AGAINST ORDERS"

"AGAINST ORDERS"

"Here comes Captain Bogart—we'll ask him," said the talkative man.

His listeners were grouped about one of the small tables in the smoking-room of the *Moldavia,* five days out. The question was when the master of a vessel should leave his ship. In the incident discussed every man had gone ashore—even the life-saving crew had given her up: the master had stuck to his post.

The captain listened gravely.

"Yes—if there's one chance in a thousand of saving her. Regulations are pretty plain; can't forget 'em unless you want to," and he walked on.

That night at dinner I received a message to come to the captain's cabin. He had some coffee that an old Brazilian had sent him. His steward hailed from Rio, and knew how to grind and boil it.

Over the making the talk veered to the inquiry in the smoking-room.

"When ought a commander to abandon his ship, Captain?" I asked.

"When his passengers need him. Passengers first, ship next, are the orders. They're clear and exact—can't mistake 'em."

"You speak as if you had had some experience." A leaf from out the note-book of a live man doing live things is as refreshing as a bucket of cool water from a deep well.

"Experience! Been forty years at sea."

"Some of them pretty exciting, I suppose."

"Yes. Half a dozen of 'em."

He emptied his cup, rose from his seat, and pushing back his chair, began pacing the floor, stepping into the connecting chart-room, bending for an instant over the map, and stepping back again, peering through the small window a-grime with the spray of a north-easter.

My question, I could see, had either revived some unpleasant memory or the anxiety due to the sudden shift of wind—it had been blowing south-west all day—had made him restless.

As my eyes followed his movements I began to realize the enormous size of the man. Walking the deck, head up, body erect, his broad shoulders pulled back, his round, solid girth tightly confined in his simple uniform, he looked the brawny, dominant, forceful commander that he was—big among the biggest passengers. Here, pacing the small cabin,

his head almost touching the ceiling, his great frame filled the small narrow room as an elephant would fill a boudoir. Everything seemed too small for him —the table, even the chair which he had now regained, the tiny egg-shell cup which he was still grasping.

Looking closer—his head in full profile against the glow of the electric light—I caught the straight line of the ruddy, seamed neck—a bull's neck in strength, a Greek athlete's in refinement of line—sweeping up into the close-cropped, iron-gray hair. Then came the round of the head; the massive forehead, strong, straight nose; thin, compressed lips, moulded thin and kept compressed by a life of determined effort; square-cut chin and the iron jaw that held the lips and chin in place.

When he rose to his feet again I had another surprise. To my astonishment he was not a Colossus at all—not in pounds and inches. On the contrary, he was but little above the average size. What had impressed me had not been his bulk, but his reserve force. Tigers stretched out in cages produce this effect; so do powerful machines that dig, crunch, or pound—dormant until their life-steam sets them going.

The gale increased in violence. We got now the lift of the steamer's bow, staggering under tons of

water, and the whir of the screw in mid-air. The captain glanced at the barometer, drew his body to its full height, reached for his storm-coat, slipped it on, and was about to swing back the door opening on the deck, when the chirp of a canary rang through the room. At the sound he turned quickly and walked back to where the cage hung.

"Ho, little man!" he cried in the same tone of voice in which he would have addressed a child; "woke you up, did we? Sorry, old fellow; tuck your head down again and take another nap."

The bird stretched out its bill, fluttered its wings, pecked at the captain's outstretched finger, and burst into song.

"Yours, captain?" I had not noticed the bird before.

"Yes; had him for years."

Instantly the absurdity of the companionship broke upon me. What possible comfort, I thought, could a man like the captain take in so tiny a creature? It was the lion and the mouse over again—the eagle and the tom-tit—the bear and the rabbit. He must have noticed my surprise and amusement, for he added with a smile:

"Must have something. Gets pretty lonesome sometimes when you have no wife nor children, and there are none anywheres for me." He had with-

drawn his fingers now, and was buttoning his coat close about his broad chest, his eyes still on the bird that was splitting its little throat in a burst of song.

"But he's so small," I laughed. "I should think you'd have a dog—seems nearer your size."

I once saw a man struck by a spent bullet. I remember the sudden pallor, the half gasp, and the expression of pain that followed. Then the man uttered a cry. The same expression crossed the captain's face, but there was no gasp and no cry; only a straightening of the lips and a tightening-up of the iron jaw. Then, without a word of any kind in answer, he caught up his cap, swung back the door, and with the wind full on his chest, breasted his way to the bridge.

When the door swung open a moment later it closed on the first officer—a square, thick-set, round-headed man, with mild blue eyes set in a face framed by a half-circle of reddish-brown whiskers, the face tanned by twenty-five years of sea service, fifteen of them with Captain Bogart.

"Getting soapy," he said; "wind haulin' to the east'ard. Goin' to have a nasty night." As he spoke he stripped off his tarpaulins, hung them to a hook in the chart-room, and wiping the salt grime from his face with his coat cuff, took the captain's empty seat at the table.

I knew by the captain's silent departure that I had made a break of some kind, but I could not locate it. Perhaps the first officer might explain.

"Captain lost his wife, didn't he?" I asked, moving my chair to make room.

"No—never had one." He leaned forward and filled one of the empty cups. "Why did you think so?"

"Well, more from the tone of his voice than anything else. Some trouble about it, wasn't there?"

"There was. His sweetheart was burned to death ten years ago—lamp got upset." These men are direct in their speech. It comes from their life-long habit of giving short, crisp, meaning orders. He had reached for the sugar now, and was dropping the lumps slowly into his cup.

"That explains it, then," I answered. "We were talking about the bird over there, and he said a man must have something to love, being without wife or children, and then I told him a big man like himself, I should think, would rather have a dog——"

The first officer put down his cup, jerked his body around, and said, his blue eyes looking into mine:

"You didn't say that, did you?"

I nodded my head.

"Mighty sorry. Don't any of us talk to him of his dog. What did he say?"

"Nothing. Turned a little pale, got up, and went out."

"Too bad! You didn't know, of course—wish I'd posted you."

"Then he *did* have a dog?"

"Yes, belonged to that poor girl."

"What became of him?"

The first officer leaned over the table and rested his elbows on the cloth, his chin in the palms of his hands. For some time he did not speak. Outside I could hear the thrash of the sea and the slosh of spent waves coursing through the deck gutters.

"You want to hear about that dog, do you?" he asked, straightening up. "Well, I can tell you if any man can, but you're to keep mum about it to the captain."

Again I nodded.

He fumbled in his outside pocket, drew forth a short pipe, rapped out the dead ashes, refilled it slowly from a pouch on the table, lighted it, and settled himself in his chair.

"I'll begin at the beginning, for then you'll understand how I came to be mixed up in it. I saw that dog when he first came aboard, and I want to say right here that the sight of him raised a lump in my throat big as your fist, for he was just the mate of the one I owned when I used to look after my father's sheep

on the hills where we lived. Then, again, I took to him because he wasn't the kind of a pet I'd ever seen at sea before—we'd had monkeys and parrots and a bobtail cat, but never a dog—not a real, human dog.

"He was one of those brown-and-white combed-out collies we have up in my country, with a long, pointed nose that could smell a mile and eyes like your mother's—they were so soft and tender. One of those dogs that when he put his cold nose alongside your cheek and snuffed around your whiskers you loved him—you couldn't help it—and you knew he loved you. As for the captain—the dog was never three feet from his heels. Night or day, it was just the same—up on the bridge, followin' him with his eyes every time he turned, or stretched out beside his berth when he was asleep. Hard to understand how such a man can love a dog until you saw that one. Then, again, this dog had another hold upon the captain, for the girl had loved him just the same way.

"And he had the best nose in a fog—seemed as if he could sniff things as they went by or came on dead ahead. After a while the captain would send him out with the bow-watch in thick weather, and there he'd crouch, his nose restin' on the rail, his eyes peerin' ahead. Once he got on to a brigantine comin' bow on minutes before the lookout could see her—

smelt her, the men said, just as he used to smell the sheep lost on the hillside at home. It was thick as mud—one of those pasty fogs that choke you like hot steam. We had three men in the cro'nest and two for'ard hangin' over her bow-rail. The dog began to grow restless. Then his ears went up and his tail straightened out, and he began to growl as if he had seen another dog. The captain was listenin' from the bridge, and he suspected somethin' was wrong and rang 'Slow down!' just in time to save us from smashing bow on into that brigantine. Another time he rose on his hind legs and 'let out' a yelp that peeled everybody's eyes. Then the slippery, barnacle-covered bottom of a water-logged derelict went scootin' by a few yards off our starboard quarter. After that the men got to dependin' on him—'Ought to have a first mate's pay,' I used to tell the captain, at which he would laugh and pat the dog on the head.

"One morning about eight bells, some two hundred miles off Rio—we were 'board the *Zampa,* one of our South American line, with eighteen first-class passengers, half of 'em women, and ten or twelve emigrants—when word came to the bridge that a fire had started in the cargo. We had a lot of light freight on board and some explosives which were to be used in the mines in the mountains off the coast,

so fire was the last thing we wanted. Bayard—did I tell you the dog's name was Bayard?—that's what the girl called him—was on the bridge with Captain Bogart. I was asleep in my bunk. First thing I knew I felt the dog's cold nose in my face, and the next thing I was on the dead run for the after-hatch. I've had it big and ugly a good many times in my life; was washed upon a pile of rocks once stickin' up about a cable's length off our coast, and hung to the cracks until I dropped into a lifeboat; and another time I was picked up for dead off Natal and rolled on a barrel till I came to. But that racket aboard the *Zampa* was the worst yet.

"When I jumped in among the men the smoke was creepin' out between the lids of the hatch. We ripped that off and began diggin' up the cargo—crates of chairs, rolls of mattin', some spruce scantling—runnin' the nozzle of the hose down as far as we could get it. There were no water-tight compartments which we could have flooded in those days as there are now, or we could have smothered it first off. What we had to do was to fight it inch by inch. I knew where the explosives were, and so did the captain and purser, but the crew didn't—didn't even know they were aboard, and I was glad they didn't. We had picked most of 'em up at Rio—or they'd made a rush maybe for the boats, and then we'd had

to shoot one or two of 'em to teach the others manners. In addition to every foot of hose we had 'board I started a line of buckets and then rushed a gang below to cut through the bulkhead to see if we could get at the stuff better.

"The men fell to with a will. Fire ain't so bad when you take hold of it in time, and as long as there is plenty of steam pressure—and there was—you can almost always get on top of it, unless something turns up you don't count on.

"That's what happened here. I was standin' on the coamings of the hatch at the time, peerin' down into the smoke and steam, thinking the fire was nearly out, directing the men what to h'ist out and what to leave, when first thing I knew there came a dull, heavy thump, as if we'd struck a rock amidships, and up puffed a cloud of smoke and sparks that keeled me over on my back and nearly blinded me.

"I knew then that the fire had just begun to take hold; that thump might have been a cask of rum or it might have been a box of nitro-glycerine. Whatever it was, there was no time to waste in stoppin' the blaze before it reached the rest of the cargo.

"Captain Bogart had felt the shock and now came runnin' down the deck with the dog at his heels. He knew I'd take care of the fire and he hadn't left the

bridge, but the way she shook and heaved under the explosion was another thing.

"By this time the passengers were huddled together on the upper deck, frightened to death, as they always are, the women the coolest in the crowd. All except two little old women, sisters, who lived out of Rio and who had been with us before. Fire was one of the things that scared them to death, and they certainly were scared. They hung to the rail, their arms around each other—the two together didn't weigh a hundred and fifty pounds; always reminded me of two shiverin' little monkeys, these two old women, although maybe it ain't nice for me to say it—and looked down over the rail into the sea, and said they never could go down the ladder, and did all the things badly scared women do, short of pitching themselves overboard, which sometimes occurs. The captain stopped and talked to 'em—told 'em there was no danger—his ears open all the time for another let-go, and the dog nosed round and put out his paw as if to make good what the captain had promised.

"The water was goin' in now pretty lively—all the pumps at work—the light stuff bein' heaved overboard as fast as it came out. By dark we'd got the fire under so that we had steam where before we'd had smoke and flame. The passengers had quieted down and some of 'em had gone back to their state-

rooms to get their things together, and everything was going quiet and peaceable—this was about nine o'clock—when there came another half-smothered explosion and the stokers began crawlin' up like rats. Then the chief engineer stumbled out—no hat nor coat, his head all blood where a flying bolt had gashed him. Some of her bilge plates was loose, he said, and the water half up to the fire-boxes. Next a column of flame came pouring out of her companionway, which crisped up four of our boats and drove everybody for'ard. We knew then it was all up with us.

"The captain now sent every man to the boats—those that would float—and we began to get the passengers and crew together—about sixty, all told. That's pretty nasty business at any time. They're like a flock of sheep, huddlin' together, some wantin' to stay and some crazy to go; or they are shiverin' with fright and ready to knife each other—anything to get ahead or back or wherever they think it is safest. This time most of 'em had got on to the explosives; they knew something was up, either with the boilers or the cargo, and every one of them expected to be blown up any minute.

"I stood by the rail, of course, and had told off the men I could trust, puttin' 'em in two lines to let 'em through one at a time, women first, then the old men, and so on—same old story; you've seen it, no

doubt—and had got four boats overboard and filled —the sea was pretty calm—and three of 'em away and out of range of fallin' pieces if she did take a notion to let go suddenly, when the dog sprang out of the door at the top of the stairs leading down to the main deck, barkin' like mad, runnin' up to the captain, who stood just behind me, pullin' at his trousers, and runnin' back again. Then a yell came from the boat below that one of the old women was missing: it was her sister. One half-crazy man said she'd jumped overboard—he was crowdin' up to the rail and didn't want to stop for anything—and another said she had gone off in the first boat, which I knew was a lie.

"'Have you sent them both down?' asked Captain Bogart.

"'No, sir; only one,' I said—and I hadn't.

"Just then a steward stepped up with a bundle of clothing in his hand.

"'I tried to get her out, but she'd locked herself in the stateroom, sir. It was all afire when I come up.'

"It took about two seconds for Captain Bogart to jump clear of the crowd, run half the length of the deck and plunge through the door leadin' to the main deck, the dog boundin' after him.

"I've been through a good many anxious minutes

in my life, but those were the worst I'd had up to date. He and I had been pretty close ever since I went to sea. He's ten years older than I am, but he gave me my first chance. Yes; that kind of thing takes the heart out of you, and they were both in it. Hadn't been for the dog we wouldn't have missed her, maybe, although the captain was keeping tally of the passengers and crew.

"Three minutes, they said it was—more like three hours to me—I held the crowd back, wondering how long I ought to wait if he didn't come up, knowing my duty was to stay where I was, when the dog sprang out of the door, half his hair singed off him, barkin' and jumpin' as if he had been let out for a romp; and then came the captain staggerin' along, his face scorched, his coat half burned off him, the woman in his arms in a dead faint and pretty nigh smothered. The old fool had locked herself in her stateroom—he had to break down the door to get at her—cryin' she'd rather die there than be separated from her sister.

"We made room for the two—the half-crazy man fallin' back—and the captain lowered her himself into the boat alongside her sister, and then he sent me down the ladder behind her to catch the others when they came down and see that everything was ready to cast off.

"I could see the captain now from my position in the boat, up against the sky—he was the last man on the ship—holding the dog close to him. Once I thought he was going to bring him down in his arms, he held him so tight.

"Next time I looked he was coming down the ladder slowly, one foot at a time, the dog looking down at him, his big, human eyes peering into the captain's face, his long, pointed nose thrust out, his ears bent forward. If he could have spoken—and he looked as if he was speaking—he would be telling him how glad he felt at savin' the old woman, and how happy he was that they'd all three got clear. My own collie used to talk to me like that—had a kind of low whine when he'd get that way; tell me about his sheep stuck in the snow, and the way the——"

The first officer stopped, cleared his throat, shook the ashes from his pipe and laid it on the table. After a while he went on. His words came slower now, as if they hurt him.

"When the captain got half-way down the ladder I saw him stand still for a moment and look straight up into the dog's eyes. Then I heard him say:

"'Down, Bayard! Stay where you are.'

"The dog crouched and lay with his paws on the edge of the rail. That's what he'd done all his life—

"He was coming down the ladder slowly."

just obeyed orders without question. Again I saw the captain stop. This time he slipped his hand into his side-pocket, half drew out his revolver, put it back again, and kept on his way down the ladder to the boat.

"Then the captain's order rang out:

"'Get ready to shove off!'

"Hardly had the words left his lips when there came another dull, muffled roar, and a sheet of flame licked the whole length of the deck. Then she fell over on her beam.

"'My God!' I cried; 'left that dog to die!'

For a moment the first officer did not answer. Then he raised his eyes to mine and said in a voice full of emotion:

"Yes; there was nothin' else to do. It's against orders to take animals into life-boats. They take room and must be fed, and we hadn't a foot of space or an ounce of grub and water to spare, and we had two hundred miles to go. I begged the captain. 'I'll give Bayard my place,' I said. I knew he was right; but I couldn't help it. 'Let me go back and get him.' I know now it would have been foolish; but I'd have done it all the same. So would you, maybe, if you'd known that dog and seen his trusting eyes lookin' out of his scorched face and remembered what he'd just done.

"The captain never looked at me when he answered. He couldn't; his eyes were too full.

"'Your place is where you are, sir,' he said, short and crisp. 'Shove off, men.'

"He will never get over it. That dog stood for the girl he'd lost, somehow. That's the captain's bell. I'm wanted on the bridge. Good-night."

Again the cabin door swung free, letting in a blast of raw ice-house air, the kind that chills you to the bone. The gale had increased. Through the opening I could hear the combers sweeping the bow and the down-swash of the overflow striking the deck below.

With the outside roar came the captain, his tarpaulins glistening with spray, his cap pulled tight down to his ears, his storm-beaten face ruddy with the dash and cut of the wind. He looked like a sea Titan that had stepped aboard from the crest of a wave.

If he saw me—I was stretched out on the sofa by this time—he gave no sign. Opening his tarpaulins and thrashing the water from his cap, he walked straight to the cage, peered in, and said softly:

"Ah, my little man! Asleep, are you? I just came down to take a look at the chart and see how you were getting on. We're having some weather on the bridge."

MUGGLES'S SUPREME MOMENT

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I

A most estimable young man was Muggles: a clean-shaven, spick-and-span, well-mannered young man—particular as to the brushing of his hat, the tying of his scarf and the cut of his clothes; more than particular as to their puttings-on and puttings-off—sack-coat and derby for mornings; top hat and frock for afternoons; bobtail and black tie for stags, and full regalia of white choker, white waistcoat and swallow-tail for smart dinners and the opera.

He knew, too, all the little niceties of social life—which arm to give to his hostess in escorting her out to dinner; on which side of a hansom to place a lady; the proper hours for calling; the correct thing in canes, umbrellas, stick-pins and cigar-cases; the way to balance a cup of afternoon tea on one knee while he toyed with a lettuce sandwich teetering on the other—all the delicate observances so vital to the initiated and so unimportant to the untutored and ignorant. Then Muggles was a kind and considerate

young man—extremely kind and intrusively considerate; always interesting himself in everybody's affairs and taking no end of trouble to straighten them out whether importuned or not—and he seldom was.

This idiosyncrasy had gained for him during his college days the title of "Mixey." This in succeeding years had been merged into "Muddles" and finally to "Muggles," as being more euphonious and less insulting. Of late among his intimates he had been known as "The Goat," due to his constant habit of butting in at any and all times, a sobriquet which clings to him to this day.

His real name—the one he inherited from his progenitors and now borne by his family—was one that stood high in the fashionable world: a family that answered to the more dignified and aristocratic patronymic of Maxwell—a name dating back to the time of Cromwell, with direct lineage from the Earl of Clanworthy—John, Duke of Essex, Lord Beverston—that sort of lineage. No one of the later Maxwells, it is true, had ever been able to fill the gap of a hundred years or more between the Clanworthys and the Maxwells, but a little thing like that never made any difference to Muggles or his immediate connections. Was not the family note-paper emblazoned with the counterfeit presentment of a Stork Rampant

caught by the legs and flopping its wings over a flattened fish-basket; and did not Muggles's cigarette-case, cuff-buttons and seal ring bear a similar design? And the wooden mantel in the great locked library, and which was opened and dusted twice a year—the books, not the mantel—did it not support a life-sized portrait of the family bird done in wood, with three diminutive storklets clamoring to be fed, their open mouths out-thrust between their mother's breast and the top edge of the fish-basket, enwreathed by a more than graceful ribbon bearing the inscription, "We feed the hungry"—or words to that effect?

None of these evidences of wealth and ancestry, it must be said, ever impressed the group of scoffers gathered about the wood fire of the "Ivy" in his college days, or about the smart tables at the "Magnolia Club" in his post-graduate life. To them he was still "Mixey," or "Muddles," or "Muggles," or "The Goat," depending entirely upon the peculiar circumstances connected with the mixing up or the butting in.

To his credit be it said the descendant of earls and high-daddies never lost his temper at these onslaughts. If Bender, or Podvine, or little Billy Salters pitched into him for some act of stupidity—due entirely to his misguided efforts to serve some mutual friend—Muggles would argue, defend and protest, but the

discussion would always end with a laugh and his signing the waiter's check and ordering another one for everybody.

"Why the devil, Muggles, did you insist last night on that Boston girl's riding home from the theatre in the omnibus, you goat?" thundered Podvine one morning at the club, "instead of letting her——"

"My dear fellow," protested Muggles, "it was much more comfortable in the omnibus, and——"

"——And broke up her walk home with Bobby, you idiot! He had to take the owl train home, and she won't see him for a month. Didn't you know they were engaged?"

"No——"

"Of course you didn't, Muggles, but you could have seen it in her face if you'd looked. You always put your foot in it clean up to your pants' pocket!"

"You've been at it again, have you, Muggles?" burst out Bender that same night. "Listen to the Goat's last, boys. Jerry wanted to buy that swamp meadow next his place on Long Island and had been dickering with the old fellow who owns it all winter, telling him it would be a good place to raise cranberries if it was dug out and drained, and they had almost agreed on the price—about twice what it was worth—when down goes Muggles to spend the night and Jerry blabs it all out, and just why he wanted

it, and the next morning Muggles, to clinch the deal and help Jerry, slips over to the hayseed and tells him how the Sunnybrook Club are going to buy Jerry's place, and how they wanted the swamp for a hatchery—all true—and that the hayseed oughtn't to wait a moment, but send word by *him* that the deal was closed, because the club-house being near by would make all the rest of his land twice as valuable; and the old Skeezicks winked his eye and shifted his tobacco and said he'd think about it, and now you can't buy that sink-hole for twenty times what it's worth, and the Sunnybrook is looking for another site nearer Woodvale. Regular clown you are, Muggles. Exactly like that fellow at the circus who holds up one end of the tent and then, before the supes can reach it, drops it for the other end."

When the results of this last well-intentioned effort with its disastrous consequences became clear to the Goat, that spotless gentleman leaned back in his chair, threw back his shoulders, shot out his cuffs, readjusted his scarfpin and replied in an offended tone:

"All owing, my dear fellow, to the stupidity of the agricultural class. I told the farmer he would regret it, and he will. As for myself, I was awfully disappointed. I had planned to run all the way back to Jerry's and tell him the good news before he went to sleep that night, and——"

"Disappointed, were you? How do you think Jerry felt? Made a lot of difference to him, I tell you, not selling his place to the club. Been a whole year working it up. It's smothered now under a blanket—about ninety per cent. of its value—and the Sunnybrook scheme would have pulled him out with a margin! Now it's deader than last year's shad. What the club wanted was a hatchery built over a spring, and that's why that swamp was necessary to the deal. Oh, you're the limit, Muggles!"

It was while smarting under these criticisms that the steward one morning in June brought him his letters. One was from Monteith—Class of '91—a senior when Muggles was a freshman—and was postmarked "Wabacog, Canada," where Monteith owned a lumber mill—and where he ran it himself and everything connected with it from stumpage to scantling. "There is a broad stream that runs into the lake, . . . and above the mill there are bass weighing ten pounds, . . . and back in the primeval forest bears, . . . and now and then a moose——" So ran the letter. Muggles had spread it wide open by this time and was reading it aloud—everybody knowing Monteith—and the group never having any secrets of this kind from each other.

"Come up, old chap," the letter continued, "and

stay a week—two, if you can work it—and bring Bender, and little Billy and Poddy, and three or four more. The bungalow holds ten. Wire when—I'm now putting things on ice."

Muggles looked around the circle and sent interrogatory Marconigrams with his eyebrows. In response Podvine said he'd go, and so did Billy Salters. Bender thought he could come a day or two later—the earning of their daily bread was not an absorbing task with these young gentlemen—their fathers had done that years before.

Muggles ran over in his mind the list of his engagements: he was due at Gravesend on the tenth for a week, to play golf; at his aunt's country-seat in Westchester on the eleventh for the same length of time, and on the twelfth he was expected to meet a yacht at Cold Spring Harbor for a cruise up the coast. He had accepted these invitations and had fully intended to keep each and every one. Monteith's letter, however, seemed to come at a time when he really needed a more virile and bracing life than was offered by the others. Here was a chance to redeem his reputation. Lumber camps meant big men doing big things—things reeking with danger, such as falling trees, forest fires and log jams. There might also be hair-breadth escapes in the hunting of big game and the tramping of the vast wilder-

ness. This dressing three times a day and spending the intermediate hours hitting wooden balls, or lounging in a straw chair under a deck awning, had become tiresome. What he needed was to get down to Nature and hug the sod, and if there wasn't any sod then he would grapple with whatever took its place.

Muggles dropped his legs to the floor, straightened his back, beckoned to a servant, motioned for a telegraph blank—exertion is tabooed at the Magnolia—untelescoped a gold pencil hooked to his watch-chain, and wrote as follows:

"Thanks. Coming Tuesday."

II

Wabacog covers a shaved place in a primeval forest which slopes to a lake of the same name. Covering this bare spot are huge piles of sawed lumber—Monteith's axe-razors did the shaving—surrounding an enormous mill surmounted by a smokestack of wrought iron topped with a bird-cage spark arrester, the whole flanked by a runway emerging from the lake, up which climb in mournful procession the stately bodies of fallen monarchs awaiting the cutting irony of the saw. Farther along, on another clearing, stands a square building labelled "Office," and still

farther on, guarded by sentinel trees and encircled by wide piazzas, sprawls a low-roofed bungalow, its main entrance level with a boardwalk ending in the lake. This was Monteith's home. Here during the winter's logging he housed himself in complete seclusion, and here in summer he kept open house for whoever would answer in person his welcoming letters.

Anything so rude and primeval, or so comforting and inviting, was beyond the experience of Muggles and his friends. This became apparent before they had shed their coats and unpacked their bags. There was a darky who answered to the name of Jackson who could not only crisp trout to a turn, but who could compound cocktails, rub down muscular backs shivering from morning plunges in the lake, make beds, clean guns, wait on the table, and in an emergency row a canoe. There were easy chairs and low-pitched divans overspread with Turkey rugs and heaped with piles of silk cushions; there were wooden lockers, all open, and each one filled with drinkables and smokables—drinkables with white labels, and smokables six inches long with cuffs halfway down their length; there was an ice-chest sampling a larger house in the rear; there was a big, wide, all-embracing fireplace that burst its sides laughing over the good time it was having (the air was cool at

night), and outside, redolent with perfume and glistening in the sunshine, there was a bed of mint protected by a curbing of plank which rivalled in its sweet freshness those covering the last resting-places of the most hospitable of Virginians.

And there was Monteith!

Some men are born rich; some inherit a pair of scissors fitted to strong thumbs and forefingers; some have to lie awake nights wondering what they will do next to help their surplus run to waste, and some pass sleepless hours devising plans by which they can catch in their empty pockets the clippings and drippings of all three. Muggles's host was none of these. What he possessed he had worked for—early, late and all the time. His father had stood by and seen the old homestead in his native Southern State topple into ashes, only the gaunt chimney left; the son had worked his way through college, and then with diploma in one hand and his courage in the other—all he owned—he had shaken the dust of civilization from his shoes and had struck out for the Northern wilds: Wabacog was the result.

All these years he had kept in touch with his college chums, and when the day of his success arrived, and he was his own master, with the inborn good-fellowship that marked his race, he had unbuttoned his pocket, shaken out his heart and let loose

a hospitality that not only revived the memories of his childhood, but created a new kind of joy in the hearts of his guests. Hence the bungalow—hence Jackson—hence the lockers and the ice-chest, and hence the bed quilt of mint.

"This is your room, Muggles—and, Bender, old man, yours is next. Podvine, you are across the hall," was his welcome. "Breakfast is any time you want it; dinner at six. Now come here! See that line of lockers and that ice-chest? Don't forget 'em, please! Step up, Jackson—take a look at him, boys. That darky can mix anything known to man. He never sleeps, and he's never tired. If you don't call on him for every blessed thing you want day or night, there'll be trouble."

They fished and canoed; they hunted bears—a fact known to the bear, who kept out of their way—never was in it, Bender insisted; they went overboard every morning, one after another, in the almost ice-cold water of the lake, out again red as lobsters, back on a run, whooping with the cold to the blazing fire of the bungalow which Jackson had replenished with bundles of dried balsam that cracked and snapped with a roar while it toasted the bare backs and scorched the bare legs of each one in turn (the balsam was gathered the year before for this very purpose).

They roamed the woods, getting a crack once in a while at a partridge or a squirrel; they strolled about the mill, listening to the whir of the saws and watching the "cut" as it was rolled away and was made to feed the huge piles of lumber and timber flanking the runway and far enough away from the huge stack to be out of the way of treacherous sparks; and at night they sat around Jackson's constantly replenished fire and told stories of their college days or revived the current gossip of the club and the Street.

Muggles ruminated over each and every experience —all new to him—and kept his eyes open for the psychological moment when he would burst asunder the bonds of conventionality and rise to the full measure of his abilities. The Clanworthys had swung battle-axes and ridden milk-white chargers into the thickest of the fray. His turn would come; he felt it in his bones: then these unbelievers would be silenced.

His host interested him enormously, especially his masterful way of handling his men. He himself had been elected foreman of Hose Carriage No. 1 in the village near his father's country seat, and still held that important office. His cape and fire-boots fitted him to a nicety, and so did his helmet. No. 1 had been called out but once in its history, and then to the relief of a barn which, having lost heart before the

rescuers reached it, had sunk to the ground in despair and there covered itself with ashes. He had been criticised, he remembered, much to his chagrin, for the way he had conducted the rescue party; but it would never happen again. After this he would pattern his conduct after Monteith, who seemed to accomplish by a nod and a wave of the hand what he had split his throat in trying to enforce. He did not put these thoughts into words; neither did he whisper them even in the ears of Podvine or Monteith—the two men who understood him best and who guyed him the least—especially Monteith, who never forgot that his college chum was his guest. He confided them instead to Monteith's big, red-faced foreman—half Canadian, part French, and the rest of him Irish—who was another source of wonder. Muggles's inherent good humor and willingness to oblige had made an impression on the lumber-boss and he was always willing to answer any fool question the young New Yorker asked—a privilege which he never extended to his comrades.

"What do I do when somepin' catches fire?" the boss replied to one of Muggles's inquiries—they were sitting in the office alone, Bender and little Billy having gone fishing with Jackson. "I'd blow that big whistle ye see hooked to the safety, first. Ye never heard it?—well, don't! It'll scare the life out

o' ye. If the mill catches before we can get the pumps to work it's all up with us. If the piles of lumber git afire we kin save some of 'em if the wind's right; that's why we stack up the sawed stuff in separate piles."

"What do you do first—squirt water on it?"

"No, we ain't got no squirts that'll reach. Best way to handle the piles o' lumber is to start a line of bucket-men from the lake and cover the piles with anything you can catch up—blankets, old carpets, quilts; keep 'em soaked and ye kin fight it for a while; that's when one pile's afire, and ye're tryin' to save the pile next t'it. Light stuff is all over in half an hour—no matter how big the pile is—keep the rags soaked—that's my way."

That night before the blazing coals Muggles broke out on some theories of putting out a conflagration that made Bender sit up straight and little Billy Salters cup his ears in attention. Monteith also craned his neck to listen.

"Who the devil taught you that, Mixey?" asked Bender. "You talk as if you were Chief of the Big Six."

"Why, any fireman knows that. I've been running with a machine for years." The calm way with which Muggles said this, shaking the ashes from his cigar as he spoke, showed a certain self-reliance.

"Out in our village I'm foreman of the Hose Company."

The sudden roar that followed this announcement shook the big glasses and bottles on the low table.

"So you'd keep the blankets soaked, would you?" remarked Billy, winking at the others.

"I certainly would." This came with a certain triumphant tone in his voice.

"Learned that practising on his head," whispered Podvine.

"Right you are, Poddy; but Muggles, suppose the mill caught first," chipped in Monteith. The mill was the apple of his eye. Fire was what he dreaded —he never could insure the mill fully against fire. "What would you protect first—the mill or the piles of lumber?"

"The lumber, of course—the mill can use its pumps if the engine-room escapes."

"Better save the mill," rejoined Monteith thoughtfully. "Trade is pretty dull." Then he rose from his seat, reached for his hat and strolled out on the portico to take a look around before he turned in.

Muggles's masterful grasp of a science of which his companions knew as little as they did of the Patagonian dialects came as a distinct surprise. What else had the beggar been picking up in the way of knowledge? Maybe Muggles wasn't such a goat, after

all. That Monteith had approved of his tactics only increased their respect for their companion. Muggles caught the meaning of the look in their faces and his waistcoat began to pinch him across his chest. This life was what he needed, he said to himself. Here were big men—the lumber-boss was one—and he was another—doing big things. Nothing like getting down to primeval Nature for an inspiration! "Hugging the sod," as he named it, had had its effect not only on himself, but on his fellows. They would never have felt that way toward him at the Magnolia. The week at Wabacog had widened their horizon—widened everybody's horizon—as for himself he felt like a Western prairie with limitless possibilities ending in mountains of accomplishment.

That night, an hour after midnight, Muggles found himself sitting bolt upright in bed. Outside, filling the air of the wilderness, bellowed and roared the deep tones of the steam siren. Then came a babel of voices gaining in distinctness and volume:

"Fire, *fire,* FIRE!"

Muggles sprang through the door and ran full tilt into Jackson and Bender, who had vaulted from their beds but a second before. The next instant every man in the bungalow, Monteith at their head, came tumbling out, one after the other.

"Fire! Fire! Fire!" rang the cry, repeated by a hundred mill hands rushing toward the mill. A spark had worked its way through the arrester, some one said, had fallen into the sawed stuff, been nursed into a blaze by the night wind, and a roaring flame was in full charge of one pile of lumber and likely to take possession of another.

Muggles looked about him.

His supreme moment had come!

The blood of the Clanworthys rose in his veins. The Pass lay before him—so did the Bridge. A full suit of dove-colored pajamas and a pair of turned-up Turkish slippers was not exactly the kind of uniform that either Leonidas or Horatius would have chosen to fight his way to glory, but there was no time to change them.

With a whoop to Bender, who had really begun to believe in him, and a commanding order to Jackson, the three stripped the costly Turkish rugs from the lounges, and blankets from the beds, and, following his lead, dashed through the woods to the relief of the endangered pile of lumber. On the way they passed a gang of Canucks, carrying buckets. It was but the work of a moment to arrange these into a posse of relays with Bender on the lake end of the line and Jackson next the pile, the gang passing the buckets from hand to hand.

This done Muggles snatched a ladder from an adjacent building, threw it against the threatened lumber, skipped up its rungs like a squirrel and stood in silhouette against the flaring blaze, his dove-gray flannels flapping about his thin legs, his attenuated arms gyrating orders to the relief party, who had spread the rugs and blankets on the fire-endangered side of the pile of lumber and who were now soaking them with water under Muggles's direction. Now and then, as some part of the burning mass would collapse, a shower of sparks and smoke would obscure Muggles; then he could be seen brushing the live coals from his pajamas, darting here and there, shouting: "More water! More water! Here, on this end! All together now!" fighting his way with hand raised to keep the heat from blistering his face, a very Casabianca on the burning deck.

Soon the tongues of flame mounting skyward grew less in number; columns of black smoke took the place of the shower of sparks; the light flickering on the frightened tree-trunks began to pale; from the rugs and blankets the hot steam no longer rose in clouds. The crisis had passed! The pile was saved! Muggles had won!

During all this time neither Monteith nor the big lumber-boss had put in an appearance; nor had Podvine nor little Billy Salters lent a hand. Bender had

stuck to his post and so had Jackson, oblivious of the whereabouts of any other member of the coterie except Muggles, whose clothespin of a figure came into relief now and then against the flare of the flames. Then Bender made his way back to the bungalow.

The last man to leave the deck was Muggles.

Backing slowly down the ladder one rung at a time, his face blistered, his pajamas burnt into holes, he examined the surrounding lumber; saw that all his orders had been carried out, gave some parting instructions to the men to watch out for sparks, especially those around the edge of the saved pile, and then slowly, and with great dignity, made his way to the bungalow—his destiny fulfilled, his honor maintained and his position assured among his fellows. He had now only to await the plaudits of his comrades!

As he pushed open the door and looked about him the color rose in his cheeks and a kind of a hotness came from inside his pajamas. Grouped about the low table, heaped with specimens of cut glass, a squatty bottle, a siphon and a bowl of cracked ice, sat every member of the coterie—Bender among them—Monteith in the easy chair at their head. If any other occupation had engrossed their attention since the alarm sounded there was no evidence of it either in their appearance or in the tones of their voices.

"Lo, the Conquering Hero," broke out Podvine. "Get up Billy and put a wreath of laurel over his scorched and blistered brow."

Muggles, for a moment, did not reply. The shock had taken his breath away. He supposed every man had worked himself into exhaustion. The only thing that had really dimmed his own triumph was the fear that on reaching the bungalow he might find the blackened remains of one or more of his comrades stretched out on the floor.

"Didn't you fellows try to save anything?" he exploded.

"Wasn't anything to save — mill was in no danger."

"Why, the whole place would have gone if I hadn't——"

"You're quite right, Muggles," said Monteith. "Let up on him, boys. You worked like a beaver, old man. Sorry about the rugs—one was an old Bokhara—but that's all right—of course you didn't stop to think."

"Well, but, Monteith—what's a rug or two when you have to save a pile of— what's the lumber worth, anyhow?"

"Oh, well, never mind—let it go, old man."

Bender, who was still soaking wet from splashing buckets, and since his return to the bungalow

"Lo, the Conquering Hero."

had been boiling mad clear through, sprang to his feet.

"I'll tell you—I've just found out. As the pile now stands it's worth four thousand dollars. If it had burned up it would have been worth six. It's insured, you goat!"

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